Vegan Sacher Torte Mascarpone Banana Cake Giveaway

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DESSERTS MAGAZINE

Issue #4

...for people who eat dessert first.

CHOCOLATE FLOURLESS CAKE

Crazy for Cupcakes

SWEET DELIVERIES

A Journey Around the World Through Cakes

Double Coconut Lamingtons

Editor's Note

This issue is all about cakes. We take you on a journey around the world through cakes. We searched all over to find great cake recipes from each country that you will enjoy making for your family and friends. We gathered great people to contribute their recipes and each of them to accompany you on this journey.

We included a bit of everything from places that offer great cakes and recipes to cake decorating and food photography. Michele Hester, created a great icing that professionals and non-professionals alike enjoy using to decorate not only cakes but plated desserts, she shows you the many ways of using this incredible icing. Louise and Vera (we refer as the one that makes cakes) take you step-by-step on how to decorate cake with fondant. Arfi shows how she take photos of her creations on a budget.

This is the biggest issue ever, with more than 100 pages featuring videos, recipes and photos. It also contains our biggest giveaway, yet. I invite all to participate in this unique travel experience through cake. We hope that you will not only be inspired to make cakes from scratch but also share your experience with others.

Until the next issue,

Vera Shepherd

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Give them LOVE!

Warren Brown, a lawyer-turned-bakery-owner, shares his recipes for spreading love in his first cookbook, CakeLove. This self-taught baker's collection of cake recipes is much more than a cookbook. Warren will delight you with his kitchen wisdom. From cakes to buttercream frostings, with luscious flavor combinations such as cayenne and cocoa, his love shines through in every recipe.

"When I began baking from scratch I was amazed to see that getting right wasn't as hard as I thought it would be, and the taste in unbeatable" – Warren

Up Close and Personal with Warren Brown...

What led you to write a cookbook? Was it an easy process? How long did it take you to write the cookbook? Is there going to be a second cookbook?

I wanted to share my reasoning and thought process behind being a baker. I also find many cookbooks are not descriptive enough in their recipes and that in part is why so many people are scared of baking. A lot of people think they can cook but can't bake. Baking is a very quantifiable and step by step process, and I wanted to make a book where this wasn't such an intimidation factor.

My second cookbook is in the early stages of development. I am trying to highlight all of the American favorites, as well as American traditions that might not be as well known and incorporate unusual historical tidbits based on our common ground.

Do you have an all-time favorite cookbook(s)?

The Encyclopedia of Herbs, Spices and Flavorings by ELizabeth Lambert Ortiz. It gave me a huge foundation for knowing what flavors can be added and layered into a dish. Essential Baker? Bruce Healy. In Art of the Cake, his description of cakes and french theory to baking cakes opened my eyes like never before.

Do you have any mentors in your professional career? Any chefs that you particularly admire and respect?

Julia Child - for her ability to put people at ease and make them melt.

Any that you have not met but would like to?

Wolfgang Puck. I admire the business he has developed.

Name one favorite kitchen utensil and kitchen appliance that every baker should have in their kitchen?

I can't stress this factor enough: every baker needs a scale and a sifter. Scooping and leveling just doesn't cut it when it comes to baking a cake because you pack in nearly 20-30% more flour than you actually need. (I think that most cake recipes call for more flour than necessary as well.) So buy a scale, place your bowl right on the scale and sift your flour directly into the bowl and you will have the right amount.

What is your favorite dessert to make?

I really like blueberry pie. Sometime in my life I'd like to try and make more pies.

What is the process for coming up with a new recipe at CakeLove?

We try to keep the menu pretty straightforward and to what people want. Many customers

stick to what they know and the basics, so we don't really try to change the menu that often. But we do have monthly head baker meetings and at those bakers are allowed to bring in samples and ideas on how to tweak or create a new recipe.

What dessert has the most success at CakeLove?

Neil's Hat Trick - a funny name for three cakes that each had three chocolates and were presented to my friend Neil on the celebration of his 30th birthday.

"Over time I realized that baking is not just careful measuring and excellent ingredients, it's love, too... You're just not baking if you don't add love." – Warren

Is the CakeLove Green Label baked from scratch too?

Everything at CakeLove is baked from scratch! It would be going against our philosophy if it weren't.

Will you be adding new items in your online store?

No.

Are there any plans for opening more CakeLove and/or Love Cafe?

We are definitely looking at new sites. The next step is a CakeLove at National Harbor - a huge and fantastic new development just outside of DC. With a hopeful recovery to the economy in 2009 I aim to continue expanding the brand to new parts of DC as well as farther into Virginia and Pennsylvania.

We heard that you hosted the second season of Sugar Rush, tell us more about that experience? Is the third season in the works?

I was really happy I did the show, as it brought viewers into the unknown world of the pastry chef. It also generated great publicity for CakeLove which I am thankful for. Food Network decided against renewing the show, so I am not doing another season of Sugar Rush. I enjoy sharing info, especially on food, so if an opportunity were to arise to do another show for TV or the web I'd certainly take a look.

What do you do when you are not baking?

When I'm not baking...sleeping? At this point my life really revolves around CakeLove and when I'm not baking I'm managing the business side of things. I recently took a trip to Hong Kong with my fiance which was fantastic, but on a regular basis I really don't have much free time.

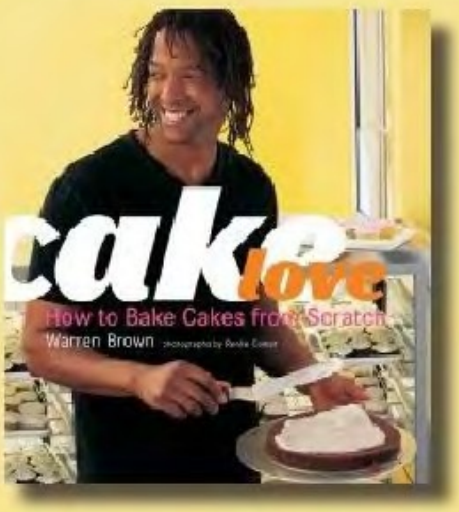
What was the most difficult situation you handled so far in your career? How did you overcome?

The most difficult situation might be...making my New Year's Resolution to learn how to bake. I was scared of it and scared of flopping. But obviously there are always triumphs and tragedies in the kitchen and half the fun was figuring out how to make recipes work. Once I saw how happy cake made people, it was easy to continue expanding and opening the stores.

What is your advice to aspiring chefs and home bakers?

Anyone can bake. Follow your dreams. I knew law was not my passion and I only wanted to do something I was passionate about.

Get this...



No-Mixer Cakes

CakeLove: How to Bake Cakes from Scratch Copyright © 2008 by Warren Brown. With permission of Stewart, Tabori & Chang. All rights reserved.

You can mix each of these cake batters in under five minutes. It's buttery, delicious, and made without a mixer anywhere in sight! Baking from scratch has never been easier.

Equipment: mixing bowl, plastic containers with lid, fine-mesh sieve, two 9-inch round pans

Yield: Two 9-inch round cakes

INGREDIENTS

DRY

Unbleached all-puporse flour, 7 ounces (1 1/3 cups), or 7 1/4 ounces (1 1/2 cups) at high altitude

Extra-fine granulated sugar, 12 ounces (1 1/2 cups), or 11 1/4 ounces (1 cup + 2 Tablespoons + 2 teaspoons) at high altitute

Confectioners' sugar, 2 ounces (1/4 cup), or 1 3/4 ounces (1/2 cup) at high altitude

Baking powder, 1 tablespoon, or 2 teaspoons at high altitude

salt, 1/2 teaspoon

LIQUID

Unsalted butter, melted 6 ounces (1 1/2 sticks)

Whole milk, 1 cup, or 1 cup + 2 tablespoons at high altitude

Heavy cream, 1 tablespoon , or 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon at high altitude

Vanilla extract, 2 teaspoons

Eggs (large), 4, or 5 at high altitude

Egg yolks (large), 1

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (conventional) or 335 degrees (convection). Set the rack in the middle of the oven.

2. Set out the ingredients and equipment.

- Sift the flour into a bowl for accurate measurement and whisk in the other dry ingredients to combine.
- Measure the liquid ingredietns into the plastic container, Seal it and shake well.

3. Whisk the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients, combining throughly.

4. Prepare the pans. Line the bottom of each pan with parchment paper but do not spray the sides.

5. Equally divide the batter between the prepared pans, and bake for 25 minutes.

6. Remove the pans from the oven when the cake is golden brown and a wooden skewer poked in the center comes out clean. Cool throughly on a heat-resistant surface.

7. Run a thin metal spatula around the rim of the pan to release the cake and invert onto a plate.

You did it! Serve with a dusting of powdered sugar.

VARIATIONS

Adjust the dry ingredients as directed

CHOCOLATE

Unsweetened cocoa powder, add 1 ounce (1/4 cup), or 1 1/4 ounces (5 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon) at high altitude

SPICE

Unbleached all-purpose flour, add 1 ounce (2 1/2 tablespoons)

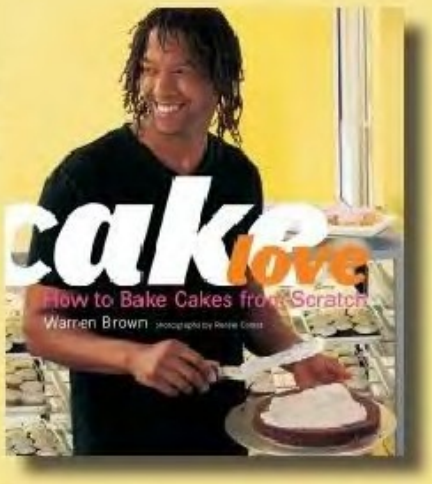
Salt, add 1/4 teaspoon

Allspice, add 1/2 teaspoon

Ginger, add 1/2 teaspoon

Cinnamon, add 1/8 teaspoon

Extra-fine granulated sugar, subtract 4 ounces (1/2 cup)



FIVE great spots to have your cake and eat it too!

These places offer not only a great selection of cakes but the taste is out of this world. Take a bite and you'll agree.

1. CAKELOVE, DC

Brown has been spreading love since he opened CakeLove in 2002, a tiny bakery in a newly hip corridor of U Street, a rejuvenated historic district lined with boutiques, clubs and cafès. With its distinctive sign above the bakery, CakeLove has been attracting a diverse clientele.

CakeLove bakes vanilla pound cake in brioche pans to form its signature Crunchy Feet, mini pound cakes baked in brioche pans that are topped with filling and fruit. Among the standards are **New German Chocolate** cake, a moist chocolate with coconut-vanilla infused buttercream. **Susie's a Pink Lady** is a three-layer vanilla butter cake with fresh raspberries, pureed raspberries flavors this pastel pink buttercream; **Neil's Hat Trick**, a delightful white and dark chocolate cakes sandwich vanilla buttercream and fresh raspberries under a glaze of rich chocolate ganache, and **Lemon Coconut** features lip licking lemon curd alternates with vanilla buttercream, lemon curd, and lightly toasted coconut flakes for a chewy and scrumptious tease between layers of vanilla cake.

More unusual are selections like Buzz Balls, a twist on the éclair, with exotic fillings, such as chocolate, lemon or mango custards; Bedrolls are walnut cake and cream cheese icing all rolled up; Sassy, a mango, orange, and cayenne cake topped with orange and vanilla-infused buttercream.

CakeLove **Strawberries & Cream**, a vanilla cake with vanilla buttercream icing and fresh strawberries between the layers; and, **My Downfall™** top the bestseller list. For more information visit, www.cakelove.com

"LCD" Vanilla Pound Cake

CakeLove: How to Bake Cakes from Scratch Copyright © 2008 by Warren Brown. With permission of Stewart, Tabori & Chang. All rights reserved.

Yield: One 12-cup Bundt cake or 32 Crunchy Feet

This cake is my mom's favorite. Once I showed up to visit without anything from the bakery and she said, "Where's the cake?" Now it's a standard part of my luggage for any trip home. I call it "LCD" for lowest common denominator. It's the one pound cake everyone knows and loves.

While this recipe might seem like it has a lot of sugar, it's necessary to drive the right amount of air into the butter during the creaming stage. That air is critical to achieving a textural harmony between light and dense.

The concentration of flavors found here comes from three sources — real vanilla bean, vanilla powder, and vanilla extract. I like this three-pronged approach because it results in a layered composition of flavors. Vanilla powder is available at most gourmet stores, but even without it this cake will still win compliments. Serve plain or as a base for any shortcake. It's an all-time favorite that must not be missed.

Equipment: Mixing bowls, standing mixer, one 12-cup Bundt pan or small brioche pans

INGREDIENTS

Dry

- Unbleached all-purpose flour 13 1/2 ounces (2 1/2 cups + 3 tablespoons) or 14 1/2 ounces (2 3/4 cups + 2 tablespoons at high altitude)
- 1 tablespoon potato starch
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt,
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda

Liquid

- 8 ounces (1 cup) sour cream
- 2 tablespoons (or 2 tablespoons and 1 teaspoon at high altitude) heavy cream,
- 1/4 cup brandy
- 1 tablespoon amaretto
- 1 tablespoon rum
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 teaspoons whiskey

Creaming

- 8 ounces (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 24 ounces extra-fine granulated sugar (3 cups), or 21 ounces (2 1/2 cups + 2 tablespoons at high altitude)
- 5, or 6 large eggs at high altitude
- 1 large yolk
- 1 vanilla bean

DIRECTIONS

Alcohol-free variation: Omit the brandy, amaretto, rum, vanilla extract, and whiskey. Substitute 2 tablespoons grated or minced lemon zest and 7 tablespoons whole milk. Whisk to combine with the liquid ingredients.

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F (conventional) or 335° F (convection). Set the rack in the middle of the oven. For Crunchy Feet, set racks in the upper-middle and lower-middle positions.

2. Set out the ingredients and equipment. Sift the flour directly into a bowl on a scale for accurate measuring. Measure the other dry ingredients into a separate mixing bowl, add the flour, and whisk for 10 seconds to blend. Set aside. Measure the liquid ingredients into a separate bowl, whisk to combine, and set aside. Measure the butter and sugar into separate bowls and set aside. Crack the eggs and yolk into separate bowls and set aside.

3. In the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the butter and sugar on the lowest speed for 2 to 3 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, slice the vanilla bean lengthwise with a paring knife and scrape out the seeds. Add the seeds to the creaming butter and sugar. Reserve the pod for another use.

5. With the mixer still on the lowest speed, add the eggs one at a time followed by the yolk, fully incorporating after each addition. Stop the mixer and scrape the sides of the bowl.

6. Add the dry ingredient mixture alternately with the liquid mixture in 3 to 5 additions each, beginning and ending with the dry mixture. Move swiftly to avoid overworking the batter.

Don't wait for the dry or liquid mixtures to be fully incorporated before adding the next. This step should take a total of about 60 seconds.

7. Stop the mixer and scrape the sides of the bowl all the way down. Don't miss the clumps of ingredients hiding on the bottom of the bowl. Mix on medium speed for 15 to 20 seconds to develop the batter's structure.

8. Prepare the pans. For a Bundt cake, spray the pan well with a nonstick spray. For Crunchy Feet, place the brioche pans on sheet pans (16 per half-sheet pan is a snug fit) and spray them liberally.

9. For a Bundt cake, fill the pan about three-quarters full by depositing the batter with the rubber spatula in small clumps around the prepared pan instead of by pouring it into one spot. Level the batter with the rubber spatula. Bake any leftover batter as Crunchy Feet or cupcakes. For Crunchy Feet, use a 2-ounce, trigger-release, ice-cream scoop to deposit the batter into the prepared pans so they're three-quarters full.

10. Follow the approximate bake times listed below.

item — sea level — high altitude

12-cup Bundt 50–55 minutes 70 minutes

Crunchy Feet 15 minutes 30 minutes.

11. Once the top of the cake doesn't jiggle in the center, test for doneness by inserting a bamboo skewer in the center of the cake. When the skewer shows just a touch of crumbs the cake is done. The sheen on top may look liquid, but this is normal and comes from the fat in the heavy cream. Remove the pan from the oven and place on a heat-resistant surface or wire rack.

12. For Crunchy Feet, carefully invert the brioche pans to release the cakes 3 to 4 minutes after removing them from the oven — well before they cool completely. You may have to tap each pan firmly — or even slam it — against the sheet pan to release the cake. Place on a heat-resistant surface or wire rack to cool. Immediately soak the pans to make cleaning easier.

13. For the Bundt cake, once the cake has cooled for 5 to 10 minutes remove the cake by inverting the pan onto a flat surface. Allow it to cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes, before glazing.

Serving and storing:
Serve at room temperature either naked or with a dusting of confectioners' sugar. To boost flavor and add a special touch, use a fruit preserve glaze from the Frostings and Glazes chapter (page 176) or Glazing Chocolate (page 174). Store under a cake dome at room temperature, or wrapped in plastic in the fridge for up to 1 week. To store longer, label, date, and store the plastic-wrapped cake in the freezer for up to 1 month.

What's the best use for vanilla bean pods after the seeds have been scraped out?
Try infusing the richly flavored pods into a liquid. I like to add my empty pods directly into cream before simmering it when making ganache. Or I'll drop one right into a bottle of brandy. I don't put the pods into granulated sugar as is often recommended — the flavor doesn't migrate as easily from crystal to crystal as it would in a liquid.

Sugared Strawberries

"Cake Love: How to Bake Cakes from Scratch" by Warren Brown

Yield: 2 cups

I can remember my Grandma Sallie telling me that the best way to eat strawberries was to cut them up, put some sugar on them, and leave them in the refrigerator overnight. For best results, use fresh, ripe strawberries when they're in season, but frozen berries can be substituted in a pinch. Sugared Strawberries can be layered with Yellow or Chocolate Butter Cake, or any No-Mixer Cake. When paired with "LCD" Vanilla Pound Cake and Whipped Cream, they make for an absolutely delicious strawberry shortcake.

Equipment: Colander, mixing bowl

INGREDIENTS
• 2 pints of fresh strawberries, or frozen strawberries thawed

DIRECTIONS
1. Wash the berries in a colander and let them drain.

2. Hull (cut the leafy tops off) the berries and quarter them with a paring knife.

3. Combine the berries and sugar in a large bowl and toss well with a rubber spatula for about 30 seconds, or until the berries are thoroughly coated with the sugar.

4. Refrigerate the berries for 4 to 12 hours — the longer the better.

5. Strain the liquid and reserve for another use. (It tastes terrific in fresh-squeezed lemonade.)

6. Use the berries right away or transfer the berries to an airtight container. Label, date, and store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Taste this...

CakeLove may be located in Washington, DC, but you too can enjoy CakeLove at home!

Send a **Box-O-Luv** through the mail! Seven sampler boxes to choose from.

Chocolate Lovers
3 Regular brownies/3 Caramel Brownies
$22.00 + Shipping

Big Cookie Lovers
5 Chocolate chip cookies/5 Chocolate-chocolate chip cookies
$22.50 + Shipping

Breakfast in Bed
3 Ginger Pecan scones/3 Lemon Cranberry scones
$20.50 + Shipping

Scratch Bars Jumbo
12 Baja / 12 Cranberry bars
$48.00 + Shipping

To place your order just call CakeLove at 301.565.2253 or 866.708.7100. Send some love today!

2 Many Sweets, 2 Little Time
(2 Scones/2 brownies/2 cookies)
1 Ginger Pecan scone/1 lemon Cranberry scone
1 Regular brownie/1 Caramel brownie
1 Chocolate Chip Cookie/1 Chocolate-chocolate chip cookie
$19.00 + Shipping

Box-O-Luv
One 6" Vanilla Pound Cake, 2 Brownies and 1 package of LuvNutz.
$32.25 + Shipping

Scratch Bars Regular
6 Baja / 6 Cranberry bars
$24.00 + Shipping

2. CAFE BLANC, CA

Tucked away on a side street in a strip mall, Cafe Blanc is easy to miss...Once you walk in the door, it was not easy to decide what to get, because they have a wide selection of cakes and tarts, a variety of chocolates and truffles, and 24 flavors of gelato with asian-inspired flavors, such as yuzu (Japanese citus fruit), sesame, lychee, and green tea. Order one of Tomi Harase masterpieces and enjoy it on location with either a cappuccino or freshly brewed tea. The individual cake will be paired with the chef's selection of ice cream or sorbet, and sauces.

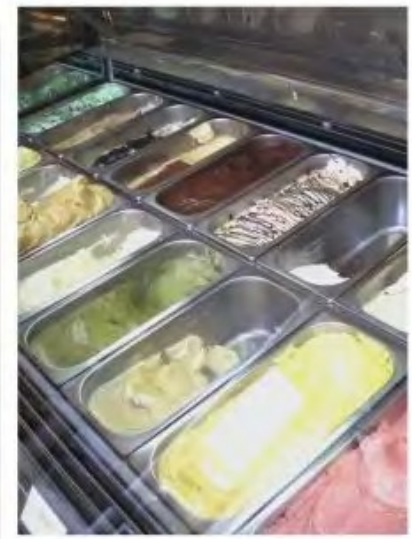
A few suggestions are the **Miroir,** a gorgeous indulgence in the shape of a teardrop, flecked with gold leaf and drenched in chocolate ganache that gleamed like a mirror. Underneath is a dense layer chocolate mousse cake, vanilla mousse, and fresh raspberries that is so light on the palate that it feels less sinful than it looks, a chocoholic dream! Another one to try is the **Couer de Bois**, a cake topped with a creamy vanilla mousse and raspbery gelee, with a hint of kirsh brandy. For a "pick me up", try **T-Maison,** a richer version of the tiramisu, mascarpone custard cream with chocolate mascarpone ganache on the bottom, finished with finely ground dark roasted coffee beans. My favorite is the **Volcano**, a tartlet with espresso flavored white chocholate mousse, hazelnut and vanilla mousse hidden inside. The **Chocolate Au Miel** is an earl grey tea flavored milk chocolate mousse topped with earl-grey meringues. **Florence** is a lemon custard covered with whipped cream on top of an almond cake topped with raspberry mousse.

Top: Mirior
Below: Florence
Photograph by Roger Tsen

Cafe Blanc is a patisserie, a glacerie and a confiserie in one. So many sweet treats to choose from, you' ll be glad you saved room for desserts at Cafe Blanc! These desserts are prepared with an European style, with a touch of Asian flavors. Chef Harase is an innovative chef with an impressive culinary background. Harase cooked in kitchens at Le Grand Velour Paris as well as Wolfgang Puck Spago in Beverly Hills and Chinois, Santa Monica. He was chef/owner of the successful French cuisine restaurant, Cafe Blanc, in Beverly Hills for 15 years before being a pastry chef and opening Cafe Blanc patisserie three years ago.

CAFE BLANC, 298 E. 17TH ST., STE. B, COSTA MESA, (949) 631-9999; WWW.CAFEBLANC.US. OPEN: Mon.-Sat., NOON.-9 P.M.; Sunday: 12pm-6pm. CLOSED: Tuesdays.

A glimpse inside Cafe Blanc...



Top: Cafe Blanc gelato.

Below: T-Maison (top-center), and **Couer de Bois** (top-right).

Top row (left-right): Miroir, Panna Cotta, Coffee Jell-o, Strawberry Shortcake and Chocolate Shortcake.
Bottom row (left-right): Cheesecake, Volcano, Napoleon, Gurietto Chocolate Cake, Vanilla Crean Puffs, Chocolate Cream Puffs, and Eclairs.

Left to right: Gurietto Chocolat Cake, chocolate moussse cake with Kirsch brandy soaked cherries. **Pistachio & Framboise Mousse Cake**, layers of pistachio mousse and raspberry mousse on a dacquoise base. **Tiramisu Cake**, mascarpone custard cream with San Farrine sponge soaked in espresso.

In the kitchen with Chef Harase...

It was a pleasure watching Chef Harase making Chantilly Chocolat Blanc d'Orange, a creamy smooth white chocolate mousse flavored with orange juice, a hint of orange liqueur, an orange gelee in the center and a dacquoise base. Simply divine...You too can watch him make this cake from beginning to end. For the recipe go to www.dessertsmag.com.

Chantilly Chocolat Blanc d'Orange

White Chocolate Orange Mousse

Orange Gelee

A Cross-section view of Chantilly Chocolat Blanc d'Orange...

Daquoise

Gelato

3. ICEBOX CAFE, FL

Robert Siegmann, owner of Icebox Cafe, is the creator of the cakes offered at the cafe. These cakes will sure make you weak in the knees. The only problem you will encounter is whether to eat the Raspberry Chocolate Mousse Cake, a moist, rich chocolate cake filled with bittersweet Belgian chocolate mousse, fresh raspberries and a silky smooth buttercream, simply irresistible; The Bomb, a two layers chocolate cake filled with bittersweet chocolate mousse and a layer of cheesecake, topped with rich bittersweet chocolate ganache, this cake will make chocoholics and non-chocoholics alike addicted to it; their signature triple-layer Coconut Buttercream Cake and Oprah's favorite, is infused with coconut syrup, filled with a light, fluffy buttercream, frosted with pink buttercream and coated with shredded coconut; the Pumpkin-Walnut-Butterscotch Cake, a vanila and pumkin cake filled and frosted with creamy butterscoth and toasted walnuts, a great choice for Thanksgiving dinner instead of the usual;... They also have an assortment of ice cream cakes. This is the place where you can have your cake and more!

Luckily, you can enjoy many of Icebox Cafe Cakes right in the comfort of your own home with just a click. Visit their website and find out why everybody rave about their cakes, www.iceboxcafe.com. 1657 Michigan Ave., Miami Beach, FL.

Coconut Buttercream Cake

"The Bomb"

Up Close and Personal With Robert Siegmann...

Best baking advice you've ever received: Best baking advice would have to be to enjoy the process....pretty much like anything in life, I guess.

Alternative dream job: I would love to have a cooking show on TV.

Weirdest thing you've ever eaten: Fried crickets in Laos

Favorite dessert(s): That REALLY depends on the mood and the moment. But as a rule, I love doughy type desserts like coffee cakes and pound cakes.

What do you do when you are not baking? I'm a competitive swimmer.

Favorite cookbook(s): I don't follow any cookbook or chef. I browse through many books and mags to see what inspires me.

Where do you look for inspiration? There's inspiration everywhere. In other restaurants, in food mags, in bakeries and even at dinner parties!

Favorite restaurant(s): Other than Icebox, you mean? LOL. There're TONS of great restaurants all over the world. I spend a lot of my down time traveling, hiking and exploring. I'm always trying new restaurants to satisfy my curiosity and to inspire me. That keeps our restaurant new and different.

Favorite chocolate brand(s): There's lots of great chocolate brands out there now. Switzerland and Belgium have always topped the list. But there're great chocolate coming out of Venezuela and Spain.

Favorite kitchen tool(s): A scraper and spatula are my favorite tools. They really feel like an extension of your hand.

Best baking tip(s) for the home baker? Follow the rules of the recipe, but also be adventurous and combine flavors that you're drawn to. It's a great way to experiment and be creative!

Learn how to make Robert interpretation of Devil Dogs...

Have you ever had a Devil Dogs? Devil Dogs is a oblong devil's food cake sandwich with a white crème filling. Robert made a rendition of this popular snack cake to please the sophisticated palate of his customers by layering rich moist chocolate cake, with silky smooth chocolate ganache and mounds of whipped cream. Sit back and watch Robert make this triple layer cake. This cake will have you lick your fingers while mouths full of cream filled cake delight your taste buds.

IceBox Cafe Devil Dogs Cake

Chocolate Cake

Yields: 3 8-inches diameter cake

2 cup oil
2 cup cocoa powder
4 cups all-purpose flour
4 cups granulated sugar
2 tsp baking powder
4 tsp baking soda
pinch salt
2 tsp pure vanilla extract
6 large eggs
2 cup whole milk
2 cup coffee

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Sift all dry ingredients, set aside. Spray three 8-inches cake pan with non-stick vegetable oil and line with parchment paper, set aside.
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer, mix the sugar and oil. Add eggs until well blended.
3. Combine coffee, milk and vanilla extract in a separate bowl.
4. Start by adding one third of dry ingredients to mixing bowl until combined.
5. Then, add one third of wet ingredients to mixture until combined
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 until all dry and wet ingredients have been used. Remember to always start and finish with the dry ingredients.
7. Distribute batter among the three 8" pans that have been greased and lined with parchment paper.
8. Bake for about 20 min. or until tester comes out dry.
9. Allow to cool on a rack before unmolding.

Chocolate Ganache

1 lb. Bittersweet Chocolate
2 cups whipping cream

1. Chop the chocolate into small bits and place in a bowl.
2. Place the cream in a saucepan and bring to a boil.
3. Pour hot cream over chocolate bits and allow to sit for about 3 minutes.
4. Stir gently until the chocolate and cream have combined to form a creamy chocolate sauce.
5. Allow to chill at room temperature long enough for it to reach a consistency like peanut butter

Whipped Cream

4 cups whipping cream
2 cups sugar
1 tsp. unflavored gelatin

1. Place whipping cream, together with sugar, in the bowl of an electric mixer.
2. As you start whipping the cream, place gelatin in a small glass cup with just enough water to dissolve the gelatin. Place in the microwave and heat for one minute.
3. As the whipping cream begins to show signs of thickening, pour the hot dissolved gelatin over it and allow it to be incorporated.
4. Continue whipping cream until stiff peak form, always making sure not to overbeat, it will be lumpy and turn to butter.
5. Refrigerate until ready to use.

To Assemble the Cake: Place the whipped cream in a pastry bag, if you do not have a pastry bag just use a spatula to spread the whipped cream on the cake. Spread the ganache on the first layer of the cake. Pipe the cream on top of the ganache and fill the first layer with the cream. Repeat the same procedure for the second layer. For the third layer spread the top of the cake with ganache, pipe the whipped cream around the border but do not fill with the whipped cream. Watch the video on the pevious page to see how Robert assembled this decadent triple layer chocolate cake.

4. FINANCIER PATISSERIE, NY

Eric Bedoucha is the Executive Pastry Chef and co-owner of Financier Patisserie, this charming pastry shop and café in the Financial District will be your favorite destination for CAKES! Since it opened in 2002, its popularity led to the opening of two branches.

Chef Bedoucha has created a simple yet elegant menu of classic French pastries. At Financier Patisserie you will find classic French pastries such as Opéra and St. Honore, as well as modern interpretations such as Cassis-White Chocolate Mousse Cake, a white chocolate & cassis mousse, almond biscuit, topped with a cassis glaze; and, Adrienne, a pistachio and chocolate composition.

Born in French Algeria and raised in Paris, Bedoucha discovered his passion for pastry at an early age. As an apprentice for a bakery in Paris under his first mentor, J.P. Weiss, Bedoucha was encouraged to enter his first competition at the age of seventeen. He continued to compete throughout his career, winning many awards.

Later Bedoucha worked at the celebrated Dalloyau in Paris, where Chef Pascal Niau taught him organization, the pursuit of perfection and the handling of volume. His impressive career path took him to the United States, where he worked with Gray Kunz at the Maxim's, La Grenouille and Lutece before heading to Bayard's where he was offered a partnership with the opening of Financier Parisserie.

When in New York, visit any of their three lovely shops and be taken by an overwhelming array of French cakes, individual pastries and vienoisserie that are made daily, on the premises. Financier also offers a great selection of espresso, coffee and lunch items, such as fresh, made to order salads, paninis and soups. For more information please visit, www.financierpastries.com

Adrienne

Cassis White Chocolate Mousse Cake

CHOCOLATE FLOURLESS CAKE

Recipe by Executive Pastry Chef Eric Bedoucha

8 ounces finely chopped bittersweet chocolate, melted
6 tablespoons soft unsalted butter
6 large egg yolks
6 large egg whites
½ cup granulated sugar

1. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees F. Prepare one 9" well buttered and floured round springform pan.

2. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment cream the butter. Then, add the egg yolks. Add the melted chocolate (not too hot).

3. Meanwhile, in another bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the egg whites until foamy and add in the sugar slowly. Whip to a soft peak.

4. Then fold in the meringue into the chocolate mixture. Pour the cake batter in the prepared pan. Bake for about 20 to 22 minutes. (**Baking time will dependent on the size of the cake pan.)

5. Allow cake to cool and to decorate dust the edges with powdered sugar, add fresh raspberries and chocolate curls.

Chocolate Flourless Cake

Opera

5. JIN PATISSERIE, CA

Kristy Choo, owner/pastry chef of Jin Patisserie, early experiences growing up around her family food store in Singapore has allowed her to develop a taste for good food.

As a flight attendant for ANA Airlines led her to international destinations, exposing her to the flavors and concepts of haute cuisine. This prompted her to enroll at the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco. She returned to Singapore and worked at the prestigious Raffles Hotel, where she had the privilege of working alongside visiting culinary super-chefs Joel Robuchon and Alain Ducasse and their team of patissiers and chocolatiers.

In 2001, Kristy was selected as the chocolatière to represent Singapore at the Hotel Food Asia culinary competition. She spent long hours training under Swissotel Stamford Executive Pastry Chef Kenny Kong. Her efforts paid off, her chocolate creations were selected as the finest in the competition. She later competed in the 2002 Culinary World Cup in Luxembourg.

In late 2002, Kristy and her husband moved to Los Angeles. In mid 2003, they opened Jin Patisserie, a pastry boutique with an Asian-inspired tea garden, located on a hip stretch of Venice's Abbot Kinney Blvd. Kristy chose the name "Jin," a modified version of Kristy's middle name ("Gyan"). In Mandarin, "Jin" means "gold" and refers to four Chinese dynasties.

Kristy continues to bring her sense of adventure to her craft by using the finest ingredients and infusing unique flavors from around the world to her edible creations. Kristy's ultimate goal is to leave her guests with smiles and fond memories of each taste. **1202 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice, CA 90291; www.jinpatisserie.com**

Inside Jin Patisserie...

Left: Display of a variety of teas and cookies. **Right:** Showcase of cakes. **Below:** Handmade chocolates and assorted chocolate gift boxes.

Left: In the kitchen, Kristy cutting the cake. Right: The water fountain at the tea garden. **Below:** Display of cakes.

MASCARPONE BANANA CAKE

Recipe by Pastry Chef Kristy Choo
Serves 12

Sponge Cake
3 egg yolks
3 egg whites
1/3 cup sugar
1/3 cup flour

1. Whisk egg whites with sugar until stiff peaks form.

2. Stir in egg yolks and fold flour into mixture. Spread batter evenly in a half-sheet baking pan.

3.Bake at 350° F for approximately 15 minutes. Cool to room temperature.

Caramelized Bananas
2 ripe bananas
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla beans

Slice Bananas and sauté in butter, sugar and vanilla beans until golden brown.

Mascarpone Mousse
1 gelatin sheet
1 egg yolk
1/8 cup water
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 cup mascarpone
1/3 cup whipped cream

1. Completely submerge gelatin sheet in a bowl of cold water and let sit until soft.

2. Whip egg yolk in electric mixer on high speed until it thickens. Add sugar to water and cook until it starts to bubble. Add cooked sugar to yolk, keeping the machine on high speed.

3. Melt softened gelatin in microwave for 15 seconds on low heat. Add melted gelatin, then mascarpone into yolk mixture.

4. Fold in whipped cream and thoroughly mix, being careful not to over mix.

Assemble the Cake

1. Spread half of mascarpone mousse on cooled sponge cake.

2. Layer caramelized bananas on top of mousse. Layer remaining mascarpone mousse over bananas.

3. Place in freezer, until set. Garnish with caramelized bananas and chocolate pieces, before serving.

Get this...

These tools are great to make individual mousse cake.

World Cuisine 8-Cup Silicone Savarin Sheet Mold & 6-Cup Silicone Non-Stick Muffin Mold

These mold are made of nonstick FDA-approved food-grade silicone. Resists temperatures up to 500 degrees F. Reusable up to 3,000 times. www.amazon.com

Ateco Stainless Steel Offset Spatula

In the professional circles, this is the exact spatula used by chefs for decorating and frosting individual sized cakes, pastries and cupcakes. The spatula's thin stainless steel blade is designed to be flexible on all sides so it glides smoothly and fluidly across your cake's surface, and slides underneath piecrusts that run along the side of your pan. The offset design lets you frost the sides of your cake with ease. www.cooking.com

Stainless Steel Cake Rings

These cake rings are fabricated from heavy duty stainless steel Will not lose their shape even after continued use Cake rings are ideal for the production of individual desserts, mousses, tarts, traditional & ice cream cakes A must for every pastry chef. They come in different sizes. www.amazon.com

Anolon Jelly Roll Pan

A convenient baking pan for almost any job, this 13-in. x 18-in. jelly roll pan is not just for jelly rolls, but can be used to bake cookies, granola bars and even to roast vegetables. In heavy gauge aluminized steel for even heat distribution with reinforced rims for extra stability and reliably level baking, it can be handwashed with mild dish soap. www.cooking.com

INSPIRATION

Recipe by Pastry Chef Kristy Choo

Makes 3-5 individual cakes
Estimated time - 1 hour

3 - 5 small baking rings
Pastry bag

Chocolate Sponge
10 large eggs
2 cups granulated sugar
½ cup Flour
4 ¾ Tablespoons Cocoa powder

Whisk eggs and sugar together. Fold in flour and cocoa powder. Pour into a baking pan. Bake at 356° F for 15 minutes. Let it cool. Set aside.

Pate a Bomb
2 Egg Yolks
1 ½ Tablespoons Sugar
1 ½ teaspoon Water

1. Boil sugar and water in a pot until a soft ball can be formed with a spoon.
2. In a mixer whisk the yolk on high speed until fluffy. Add the cooked sugar and continue to whisk until it becomes a ribbon.

Chocolate Mousse
1/3 cup 57% Weiss chocolate
2 cup Whip Cream
¾ teaspoon Sea Salt
Pate a Bomb

In a separate bowl melt the chocolate. Fold into the pate a bomb mixture and add whipped cream until thoroughly mixed. Be careful not to over fold. Set aside to be places in pastry bag.

Soft Caramel
6 Tablesppons Sugar
2 ½ teaspoon Glucose
1/3 cup Cream
1/2 teaspoon Vanilla Bean

1. In a pan add sugar and glucose and cook until it becomes a dark caramel.
2. In a separate pan boil the cream with vanilla bean at the same time. When the cream mixture comes to a boil remove from heat.
3. When caramel reaches the desired color add the boiled cream mixture very slowly. Continue to cook and slowly stir this mixture until it is about 212° F.
4. Pour into a container that will withstand the high temperature. Let cool before using it.

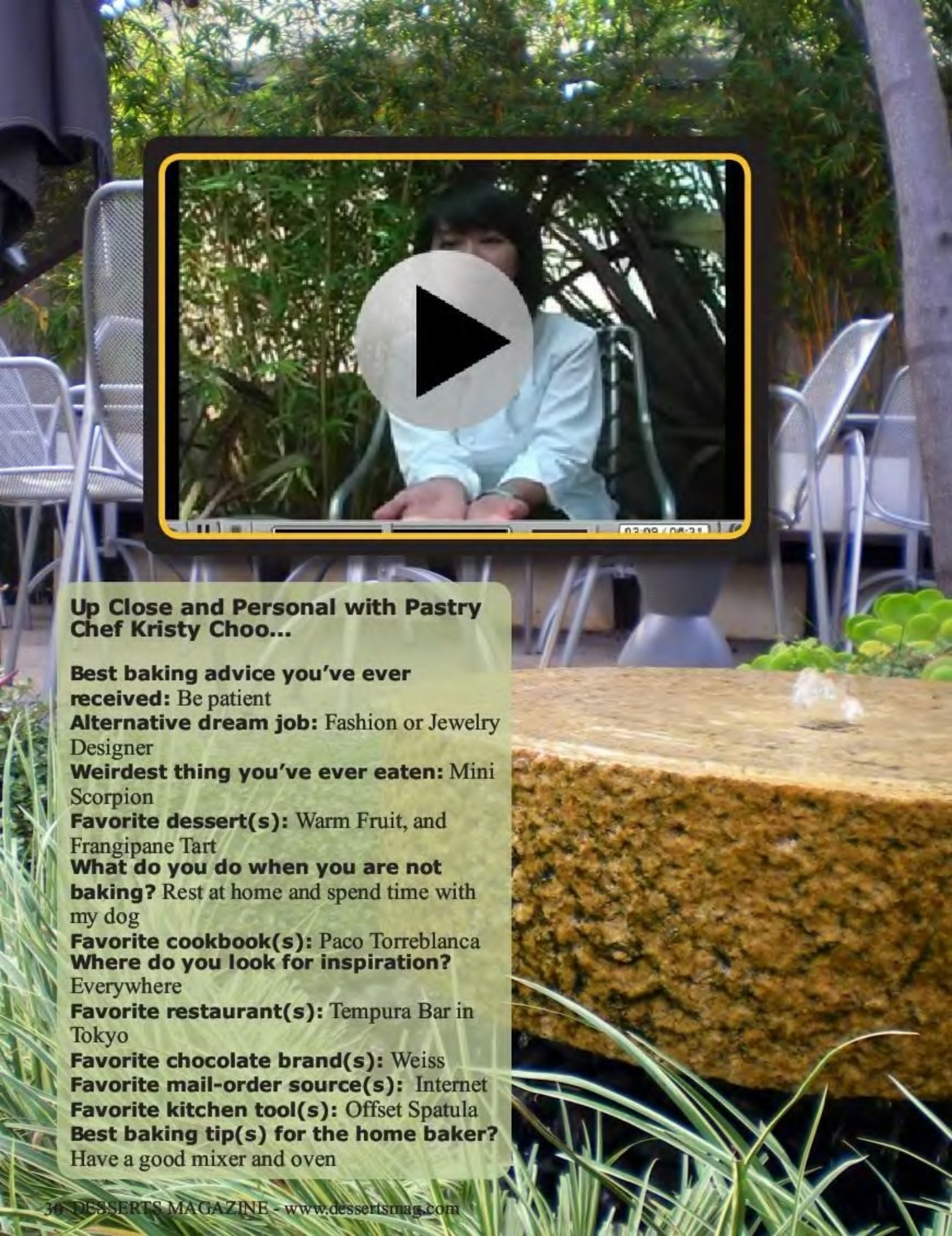
Assemble the Cake

1. Use a small baking ring and cut the sponge to desired size and set the ring with sponge still in it on a baking pan. Brush the sponge with simple syrup.
2. Place chocolate mousse in pastry bag and pipe into each ring to the half way mark.
3. Spread the mousse to the inside edges of the ring. Spoon soft caramel into each ring. Fill the rings to the top with chocolate mousse and level off with a spatula. Freeze before unmolding. Decorate with fresh fruit or edible flowers before serving.

Above: Cross-section of "Serene" layers of pistachio mascarpone raspberry jelly, vanilla custard and hazelnut feuilletine.

Above-right: Inside view of "Pick Me Up" made of Dark chocolate mousse folded with crunchy pearls, layered with espresso chocolate cream garnished with an edible flower.

Top: "Oriental" made of 57% Chocolate Mousse with coconut cream, chocolate coated roasted almonds, and Praline paste.



Up Close and Personal with Pastry Chef Kristy Choo...

Best baking advice you've ever received: Be patient
Alternative dream job: Fashion or Jewelry Designer
Weirdest thing you've ever eaten: Mini Scorpion
Favorite dessert(s): Warm Fruit, and Frangipane Tart
What do you do when you are not baking? Rest at home and spend time with my dog
Favorite cookbook(s): Paco Torreblanca
Where do you look for inspiration? Everywhere
Favorite restaurant(s): Tempura Bar in Tokyo
Favorite chocolate brand(s): Weiss
Favorite mail-order source(s): Internet
Favorite kitchen tool(s): Offset Spatula
Best baking tip(s) for the home baker? Have a good mixer and oven

Taste this...

From the kitchen of Jin Patisserie to your doorstep @ jinpatisserie.com!

Yek Yek Cookies
A traditional cookie from Singapore. Kristy's aunt recipe; this cookie melts in your mouth. It is the greatest shortbread you've ever tasted!

24 Piece Chocolate Box
Specially selected tea, spice, herbal, asian, citrus and alcohol flavors.
What's in the box? 1842 Green Tea (tea flavor), 25th December (tea flavor), 65% Bittersweet, Black Sesame, Cafe Rum, Caramel Clove, Cinnamon, Chrysanthemum, Earl Grey, Espresso, Ginger, Hanami (tea flavor), Hazelnut, Jasmine, Lavender, Lemongrass, Legumes (tea flavor), Mango Basil, Mango Kalamansi, Passion Fruit, San Complex (tea flavor), Sea Salt Caramel, Vanilla, Yuzu.

Tangerine Butter Cake
This recipe is based upon the original English pound cake that would be served during afternoon tea. We make a compote from Spanish Clementine Tangerines that have been simmered for several hours. This pound cake is dense, moist and intense, with complex layers of flavor that cause you to want just one more bite.

SWEET DELIVERIES...

Whether it's your child in college, your friend, or your grandchild across the country, there is no better way to celebrate that special day of the year than to send a cake from someone who cares. Now, you will always have a simple and wonderful way to remember them on that important day of the year or any day of the year. These two great bakeries will deliver decadent cake fully decorated in perfect condition across the country any time of the year.

1. Bake Me A Wish!

Their gourmet cakes are baked with the freshest ingredients by their award winning New York City bakery. Each cake is adorned with a decorative chocolate plaque imported from Belgium and includes a greeting card. They have fifteen flavors and can easily feed six or eight people. Our favorite is the Double Fudge Crunch Cake made of moist & fudgy 7-inch brownie cake topped with chocolate chip–cinnamon–oat streusel and ribbons of dark chocolate glaze. It also available in a 4-inch cake just the right size for one.

5% of your order will be used to assist our effort in sending gourmet occasion cakes to soldier's overseas. If you have a soldier's birthday approaching, Bake Me A Wish! will deliver a gourmet bithday cake to a soldier serving overseas, in the name of your recipient, with each purchase of The Freedom Cake. The Freedom Cake features two-layers of yellow cake filled with silky vanilla whipped cream mousse, covered with luscious buttercream, garnished with white chocolate, more mousse and red, white & blue sprinkles. Each cake can be shipped domestically in the US and will feature a special "Best Wishes" card informing the recipient that a cake has been sent to a soldier in their name, alongside an imprint of the American Flag. Send a cake and make someone's wish come true! Visit www.bakemeawish.com

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE TORTE

BOSTON CREAM CAKE

DOUBLE FUDGE CRUNCH CAKE

THE FREEDOM CAKE

2. Let Them Mail Cake

Condra Easley and Deborah Morris from Pâtisserie Angelica in quirky town of Sebastopol in California are the mastermind behind letthemmailcake.com

You may remember the Easter Egg Cake, Sweet Couture Purse Cake or the Carved Pumpkin Cake that have been featured in those high-end mail-order catalogs. After developing cakes over the last 8 years, they decided to do their own mail-order cake business. Their success comes from the art and love of pastry making. The sisters merge this with exemplary ingredients, such as antibiotic-free eggs only 48 hours old; free farmed fresh local rBST-free dairy; sweet cream butter; French, Belgian and artisan chocolates; and pure cane sugar, to create cakes that are too good to be true and are shippable!

Condra received her training at several prestigious pastry shops in Paris including Fauchon with Pierre Herme and la Maison du Chocolat. She also studied at Cacoa Barry School in France, Callebaut College in Belgium and skills classes with the British Sugar Craft Guild in England. Easley is also an adjunct instructor for the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in St. Helena. She teaches advanced decoration and wedding cake design to professional chefs.

Deborah lends her creative hands with all aspects of the business including designing and creating their award winning wedding cakes. Visit www.letthemailcake.com and let them mail cake to you!

Up Close and Personal with Condra Easley...

Best baking advice you've ever received: It actually wasn't spoken words but it was the philosophy of Pierre Hermé when I did my stage at Fauchon in Paris. It was uncompromising standards with ingredients and finished products. That really set my principles of how I approach pastry making.

Alternative dream job: Fortunately, I have had my alternative dream jobs already- Interior designer and working in architectural interior design. I think it would be fun to design food websites though!

Weirdest thing you've ever eaten: I don't do weird!

Favorite dessert(s): After 30 some years in business I

Here's two cakes in their collection that we adore...

Gateau Parisien, one of our favorite, is a heavenly combination of three hand piped almond macaroons layered with a praline buttercream. This flourless gateau is going to be your favorite too!

Wrapped Package Cake is a winning combination of chocolate chiffon cake layered with chocolate fudge and their house made raspberry jam with whole raspberries wrapped in European fondant is simply divine!

really enjoy an exceptional cookie. When I go out to dinner I go for something I don't make!

Favorite cookbook(s): I LOVE Frédéric Bau's book Au Cour des Saveurs. He is the corporate pastry chef for Vahlrona chocolates in France. My new favorite one is Tartine's but my most treasured are signed books from Jaques Pepin and Gérard Mulot.I collect pastry cookbooks so I have a groaning bookcase full.

Favorite restaurant(s): In Sonoma County we are blessed with so many wonderful restaurants. I love The Farmhouse Inn, Pizzios, Kyoto and Underwood. In Yountville my favorite is the Rutherford Grill.

Favorite chocolate brand(s): My work horse in the patisserie is Callebaut (Belgian) but I have a real affinity toward Cacoa Barry because of my time in France. I use different chocolates for different applications. I have some Scharffenberger and El Rey as well.

Favorite mail-order source(s): Beryl's and SugarCraft.com for my sugar crafting needs and I love Nashville Wraps for fun boxes, ribbons and such.

Favorite kitchen tool(s): Immersion blender, spice grinder and digital thermometer.

Best baking tip(s) for the home baker? Abandon using cups and get yourself a good scale and weigh all your ingredients. It's much more precise.

What do you do when you are not baking? Thinking about it! But I do love traveling and do quite a bit of reading in my off time.

Where do you look for inspiration? With wedding cakes I find inspiration in so many things, fabrics and flowers for example and think "That would make a cool cake!"

A sweet herald of fall. These cakes will bewitch your guests...

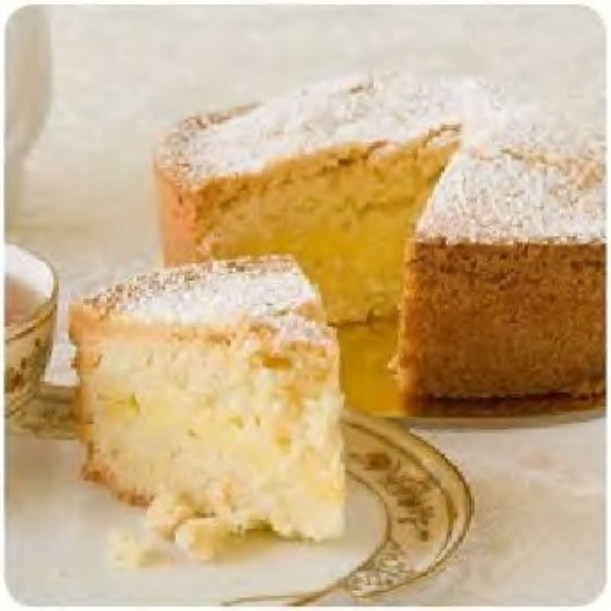
Heirloom Pumpkin Collection

Each hand-carved cake is a vanilla spice cake layered with a rich praline buttercream and a layer of decadent chocolate fudge. Then enrobed with a European rolling fondant and artfully airbrushed to layer the colors. Order one, two or all three of them! 6" diameter; serves 8-10; 2.5 lbs. www.letthemmailcake.com

Pumpkin Cake

Six layers of vanilla spiced cake with praline butter cream and a center layer of rich chocolate fudge. Handmade by award-winning artisan baker Condra Easley of Pâtisserie Angelica who air brushes the cake for an edible decoration. 5 lbs.; 8" diameter; serves 14-18. ONLY AT DEAN & DELUCA.

More cakes from Let Them Mail Cake...



Gateau Basque

This unassumming cake is sure to melt in your mouth and warm the heart. A butter based cake with vanilla bean pastry cream baked in the middle is crunchy on the outside and moist and crumbly on the inside. Perfect for breakfast, brunch, tea or after a heavy meal. 6" round serves 6-8. www.letthemmailcake.com

Sweet Couture

Created by a pastry chef who worked at some of the most famous pastry shops in Paris, from Pâtisserie Angelica, our large pink purse cake comes complete with handles, gold accents and zipper. It's layered Tahitian vanilla bean cake, with chocolate fudge and white chocolate butter cream, covered in pink fondant. This is a sweet must have for those who simply can't have enough style. 1.56 lbs., six to nine servings. ONLY AT DEAN & DELUCA.

Cardinal Sin

This cake is so unbelieveable it will make you confess all! A classic flourless bittersweet chocolate cake made with the barest essentials; Callebaut bittersweet chocolate, unsalted butter, pure cane sugar and fresh eggs. Glazed with a luscious butter ganache and topped with our hand-rolled chocolate shavings. Try this with our Raspberry Framboise Sauce. 6" round serves 6-8. www.letthemmailcake.com

Taste this...

Adagio Starter Set

This is an offer that is hard to resist! If you are curious about Adagio gourmet teas, try their easy-to-use teapot and four tea samples for only $19. Want to see what makes this teapot unique? Visit www.adagio.com and click the ""see it work"" button for a brief demonstration. Still not convinced? Then click on ""reviews"" to see what their customers have to say. Discover for yourself the startling difference of Adagio gourmet teas. www.adagio.com

Vanilla Bean Raspberry Cake

This 6" four buttery layers of soft moist white cake from Patisserie Angelica are flavored with Tahitian vanilla beans and spread with thick layers of homemade raspberry preserves and white chocolate buttercream. The same buttercream wraps the entire cake in richness before being covered in Callebaut white chocolate shavings. Just heavenly! Serves 8 to 10. Only at www.deandeluca.com

Chocolate Fudge Cake

The best chocolate cakes manage to combine soft, moist texture with ultra-rich flavor. This 6" light-as-air chocolate cake from Pâtisserie Angelica is layered with silky smooth Callebaut chocolate fudge, topped with the same and embellished with Callebaut chocolate curls. Serves 8 to 10. Only at www.deandeluca.com

Get this...

All cakes deserve to be placed on a pedestal!

Juliska Isabella Glass Pedestal

Fluid shapes, elegant details and graceful lines are the hallmarks of this glass serving piece inspired by historic European silhouettes and imaginatively interpreted for modern life. Mouth-blown by artists outside of Prague, both the cake stand and its companion dome add beauty, sophistication and a touch of whimsy to any occasion. www.deandeluca.com

Wilton Armetale Cakestand

William & Mary is a regal floral pattern by Wilton Armetale. Its antiqued appearance gives the collection an elegant and sophisticated look. Armetale metal is a food-safe alloy that was originally developed for the demanding stress of restaurant use, but its beauty and versatility make it perfect for home use. Armetale products will not break, chip, crack or dent and they will never rust, tarnish or require the delicate handling that silver and china need. Every Armetale piece is handcrafted in Pennsylvania by skilled workers, not mass produced. www.amazon.com

Get this...

Fitz and Floyd 12-in. Santa Cake Stand

Friends and family who enjoy the trimmings of a traditional and whimsical style Christmas will wholeheartedly embrace their Stocking Stuffers collection. This adorable Santa is intent on putting a smile on everyone's face as he fills their stockings with brightly wrapped gifts in traditional red and green holiday colors. This collection includes clever items for entertaining; some you never even knew you needed! www.cooking.com

Luigi Bormioli Michelangelo Masterpiece Footed Cake Plate with Dome Cover

Beautifully crafted glassware designed in Italy. Practical yet elegant. Safe in the dishwasher for easy cleanup. Lead Free. www.amazon.com

Rosanna Rococo Noir Black Medium 10-1/2-Inch Cake Pedestal

Crafted of durable stoneware in shiny black glaze. Skirt-like drape adds decorative effect to a cake presentation. Can combine with Rosanna's 2 other pedestals to create 3 tiers. Dishwasher-safe; comes in elegant round gold-and-black gift box. www.amazon.com

"It's hip to be square..."

Square Cake Stand

Whether the occasion is an elegant dinner party or a casual brunch, these versatile white earthenware stands will present your favorite desserts with panache. Their distinctive design makes it ideal for round or square cakes, pies and tarts – as well as an array of cupcakes, cookies, cheeses, canapés and other savory hors d'oeuvres. The stand is crafted by a family-owned Italian pottery known for exceptional ceramics since 1958. We recommend washing by hand. Small, 9 1/4" sq., 3" high; Large, 12 1/2" sq., 4 1/2" high. Made in Italy. www.williams-sonoma.com

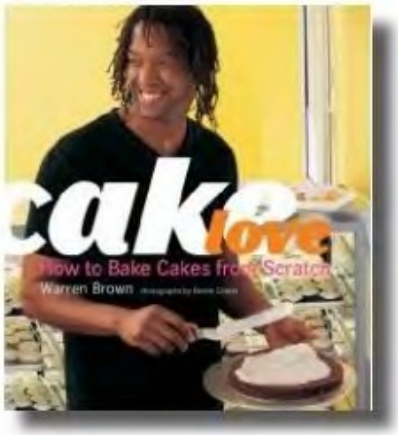
Godinger Freedom Footed Cake Plate

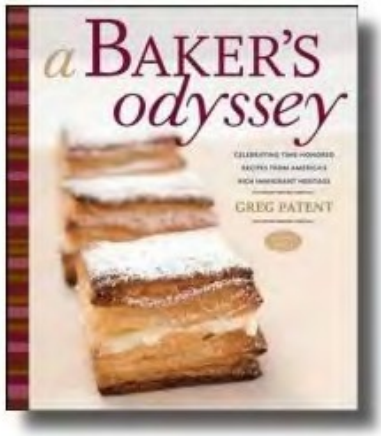
The Freedom footed cake plate has a unique rectangular shape, and will stand out in any kind of table setting. The Tiara cake plate has fan-shaped crystal cuttings on the top, and beautiful scalloped edges. The base is fluted and sets off this cake plate in a most beautiful way. This great cake plate will make a wonderful shower or wedding gift. You will want to see the entire collection of beautiful crystal serving accessories and gifts by the famous Godinger Crystal Co. www.amazon.com

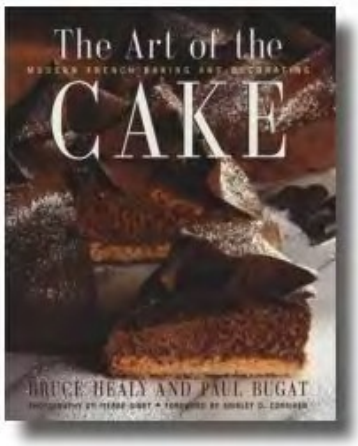
Martha Stewart Collection Square Cakestand

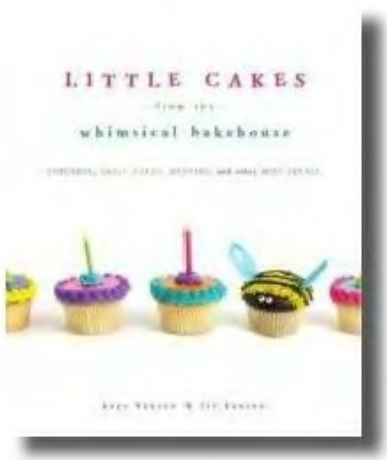
Take a collector's approach to dinnerware with elegant and durable white porcelain pieces from the Martha Stewart Collection. This square cakestand offers a smart pedestal for your desserts or hors d'oeuvres. Dishwasher and microwave safe. Small, 8" sq.; Medium, 10" sq.; Large, 12" sq. www.amazon.com

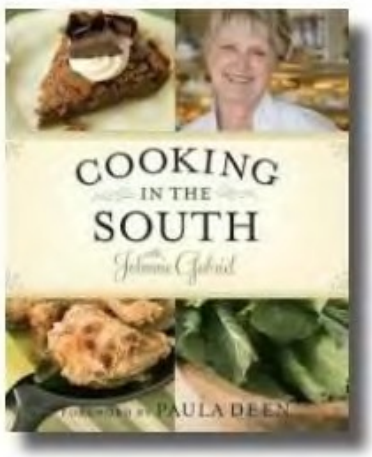
Read this... *Grab a cup of coffee and add these books to your collection...*

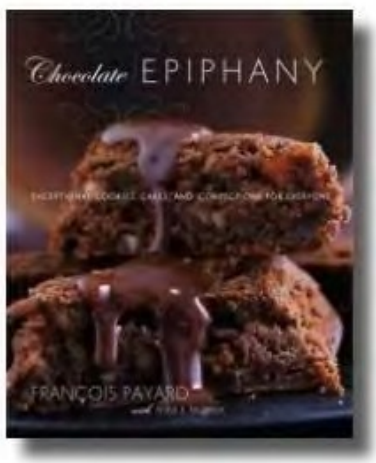












Illy Caffé was founded in Trieste, Italy in 1933 and has been passed down through three generations of Illy family chemists and coffee lovers. The company has concentrated all of their efforts on perfecting a single Illy espresso blend; a blend that has become so popular that it's served over 2 million times a day in Italy alone. Click on the link below to get free shipping on orders over $75. Start enjoying the world's finest Italian coffee today!

Dozen Cupcakes Mochi a vanilla cupcake filled with red bean paste topped with green tea buttercream rolled in black sesame seeds and granished with a green tea mochi rice cake

Crazy for Cupcakes...

The cupcake craze is apparently still going on and these treats aren't just for birthdays anymore. Here's three places for a cupcake fix that serve up delicious unusual flavors, and custom designed cupcakes.

SAS Cupcakes Bananas Foster Sweet banana cake topped with a Rum Vanilla Buttercream drizzled with caramel.

Dozen Cupcakes Cosmo, a vanilla cupcake studded with cranberries soaked in vodka and lime juice topped with lime buttercream and a lime twist

S A S Cupcakes White Chocolate Pretzel Vanilla cake topped with a sweet&saltyWhitechocolate buttercream swirled with Crushed Pretzel.

1. Sprinkles CUPCAKES

Following the footsteps of her great grand mother, Executive pastry chef Candance Nelson along with her husband, Charles, opened their first Sprinkles Cupcakes store in April of 2005 in Beverly Hills. Since then fans have been lining up for their cupcakes and they have branched out. For locations and information visit www.sprinklescupcakes.com

Up Close and Personal with Candance Nelson...

Favorite cupcake at Sprinkles Cupcake: this week it's Chocolate Marshmallow (next week who knows!)

Favorite kind of cookie: Chocolate chip – chewy, made with bittersweet chocolate chips and no nuts. I'm a purist!

Chocolate or vanilla? chocolate

Favorite ice cream flavor: mint chip

Brownies - cakey or fudgy? Classic brownie, or add extra ingredients? Fudgy and classic.

Favorite fruit: Frog Hollow's Cal Red peaches

Favorite summer dessert: Sprinkles lemon blueberry cupcakes

Favorite local restaurant: Lucques

Favorite dish to make at home: Really, I'm more of a baker but I love to cook, too. I make a mean chicken pot pie. It's all about comfort food!

Favorite dessert from childhood: Chocolate chip cookies, of course!

Favorite after work hangout: El Carmen, for house-made chips and guacamole and amazing margaritas!

Do you still bake cupcakes? I am constantly experimenting with new flavors for Sprinkles!

Who inspires you? My pastry-chef instructor from Tante Marie's cooking school, Janet Rikala Dalton. She is an incredible pastry chef and an infectiously positive person!

What flavor is the most popular at Sprinkles? Red Velvet

What happens to the unsold cupcakes at the end of the day? All leftovers are donated to food banks and homeless shelters

What do you do when you are not baking? Take my 14 month old son to the beach to build sand castles, look for starfish and walk in the ocean

How many flavors do you currently offer? 20 flavors regularly, and an additional 10-15 on a seasonal basis. We are constantly receiving requests from customers to keep our seasonal flavors around all year long!

How often do you add new flavors?

Every season and for every special holiday we offer new flavors. For example, we just offered a seasonal summer cherry and lemon blueberry. Soon we will have key lime and for Fall, almond dark chocolate.

What is next for Sprinkles cupcakes?
We are headed to Palo Alto in September 2008 and Houston in early 2009! And look for a special announcement in Fall 2008.

How many cupcake mix flavors do you offer?
Red Velvet, Vanilla, Dark Chocolate, Lemon, Pumpkin and Chocolate Peppermint.

Candace's great grandmother was renowed for creating delicious, uncomplicated desserts at her restaurant in San Francisco during the 1930's. Here's a recipe from Candance's great grandmother.

Great Grandma's Coconut Cupcakes
Makes 12

2 cups sifted cake flour
2 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
1 sticks unsalted butter
1 1/3 granulated sugar
3/4 tsp pure vanilla extract
3/4 tsp coconut extract
2/3 cup whole milk
2 large egg whites + 1 whole large egg

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and line one standard muffin pan with 12 cupcake liners
2. In large bowl, whisk flour, baking powder and salt
3. In measuring cup, combine milk and extracts.
4. In electric mixer, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Gradually add eggs and mix until combined.
5. Add half of flour mixture and mix until combined. Gradually add all milk mixture. Add remaining dry mixture and mix carefully until just combined.
6. Divide batter evenly between cupcake cups and bake approximately 20 minutes, or until cake springs back when pressed lightly.

Coconut Cream Cheese Frosting

8 oz cold cream cheese
8 T butter
1/8 tsp salt
3 3/4 c sifted powdered sugar
3/4 tsp vanilla
1/2 tsp coconut extract

1. In electric mixer, cream butter and cream cheese and salt until combined. Slowly add powdered sugar and extracts. Mix until smooth.
2. Frost cooled cupcakes and then immediately top with sweetened coconut shavings.

Tip: Make sure all ingredients are at room temperature.

2. Dozen

cupcakes, PA

James Gray attended culinary school in Chicago and worked as a baker and cook in several Chicago restaurants before moving back to Pittsburgh and opening Dozen Cupcakes in December of 2006 with Andrew Twigg. With over 24 flavors, it was not easy picking our favorites...

Rice Krispy Treat, vanilla butter cupcake filled with marshamllow fluff topped with vanilla buttercream and mini chocolate chip rice krispy treats.

Another favorite is **Copcacabana**, a pineapple cake topped with mango buttercream rolled in coconut and topped with a pineapple wedge. Their **Mochi** cupcake is made of a vanilla cupcake filled with red bean paste topped with green tea buttercream rolled in black sesame seeds and granished with a green tea mochi rice cake.

Another one to try is the **Pancakes & Syrup** cupcakes, a pancake cupcake topped with maple buttercream garnished with a piece of bacon, who said you can't have cupcake for breakfast?!?

One for the guys, the **East End Chocolate Stout**, a dark chocolate cupcake made with East End Brewing Co.'s Black Strap Stout, dipped with dark chocolate ganache and topped with Irish Cream Buttercream.

Forget happy hour and try

their **Cosmo** cupcakes, vanilla cupcake studded with cranberries soaked in vodka and lime juice topped with lime buttercream and a lime twist...shaken, not stirred, please. **1707 Murray Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15217. www.dozencupcakes.com**

Up Close and personal with James Gray...

Favorite cupcake at Dozen Cupcakes: Cosmo, a

vodka and cranberry cupcake with Lime buttercream.

Favorite kind of cookie: Chocolate Chip.

Chocolate or vanilla? Vanilla.

Favorite ice cream flavor: Chocolate

Brownies - cakey or fudgy? Classic brownie, or add extra ingredients? cakey. no extras!

Favorite fruit(s): Strawberries & blueberries

Favorite summer dessert: fresh Fruit sorbet

Favorite local restaurant: Green Mango Thai

Favorite dish to make at home: mac and cheese with gouda

Favorite dessert from childhood: swiss miss vanilla pudding

Favoriteafterworkhangout: Home

What do you do when you are not baking? Hanging out with my two Jack Russells.

How often do you add new flavors? We change the menu for Summer and Winter.

What is next for Dozen Cupcakes? The expansion of Dozen Bake Shop from one shop to three within the next year.

Ava's Pound Cake

James' friend family heirloom recipe

8 oz cream cheese
3 sticks Butter
6 large eggs
3 cups Sugar
3 cups All-Purpose Flour
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla paste
1/8 teaspoon salt

Note: Make sure all the ingredients are at room temperature.

1. Pre-heat oven to 315 degrees F. Beat the cream cheese and butter until very creamy.

3. Add sugar and beat for about 1 minute. Add flour and beat for about 1 minute.

5. Add eggs one at a time, scrape well after each addition and mix well.

6. Add vanilla and beat until combined. Place the batter in a 9-1/2 inches bundt pan or tube pan.

7. Bake until golden brown and crusty on top. Do not pull it out too early or it will fall. This cake is dense and crusty.

Dozen Cupcakes Doggie Cupcakes

Your four-legged friend is gonna love this cupcake!

3 cups All Purpose Flour
3 teaspoons Baking Soda
3/4 cups Peanut Butter
3/4 cups oil
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 cup honey
3 large eggs
3 cups carrot (chopped WELL!!!!)

1. Bake at 300 degrees F. Mix the dry ingredients. Add the remaining ingredients and mix quickly.

2. Scoop into mini muffin pans and bake for roughly 18 minutes. These take a little longer than other minis, but can burn quickly. Be careful!

3. SAS CUPCAKES, DE

Now you can send cupcakes for any ocassion, anytime of the year, anywhere in the country. SAS Cupcakes will ship freshly baked, piled high with frosting and fully decorated cupcakes across the country, that will arrive in perfect condition right at your doorstep!

At SAS Cupcakes retail store, they make over 30 types of gourmet cupcakes with 12 selections a day. From their website you can order by simply clicking on "Pick-up" or "Delivery" and choosing the day of the week you will be picking up cupcakes on or desire delivery. Their patented shipping box is designed to ensure that your cupcakes will arrive at their destination looking exactly as they are presented both at their storefront and website.

SAS cupcakes are made with all natural ingredients and don't contain any trans-fats or preservatives. The cupcakes are best enjoyed the same day they are made. However, their cupcakes will keep very well for 2-3 days if wrapped in plastic or stored in an airtight container at room temperature, do not refrigerate the cupcakes. Receiving these cupcakes is sure to put a big smile in someone face. Send cupcakes today at www.sascupcakes.com

Best Sellers Cupcake Collection

Description of SAS Cupcakes Best Sellers Cupcake Collection:

Vanilla/Raspberry: Buttery vanilla cake topped with raspberry frosting.

Vanilla/ Strawberry: Buttery vanilla cake topped and filled with creamy strawberry buttercream.

Chocolate/Chocolate: Rich deep chocolate cake topped with chocolate buttercream.

S'mores: Chocolate cake filled with marshmallow topped with a vanilla graham cracker buttercream.

Triple Chocolate: Chocolate cake with a dark chocolate truffle in the center topped with dark chocolate ganache.

Chocolate/Vanilla: Vanilla cake topped with vanilla frosting.

Oreo: Rich chocolate cake topped with Oreo buttecream.

Chocolate/Raspberry: Chocolate cake topped with Fresh raspberry buttercream.Vanilla/Chocolate:

Red Velvet: Light chocolate cake with a rich reddish hue topped with a tangy cream cheese frosting.

Chocolate/Strawberry: chocolate cake filled and topped with Pink strawberry buttercream.

Vanilla/Vanilla: Buttery vanilla cake topped with smooth vanilla buttercream.

What's in the box of a Best Sellers Cupcake Collection...

* Desserts Magazine's Favorites

Get this...

For those days you do not feel like baking from scratch...

Sprinkles Pumpkin Cupcake Mix

Use this mix to bake an autumn treat: home-baked pumpkin-flavored cupcakes. Created by Sprinkles, the celebrated Beverly Hills cupcake shop, the mix is made using the highest quality ingredients and Nielsen-Massey Madagascar Bourbon vanilla, and yields up to a dozen cupcakes. With it, you'll receive the confectioners' "dots" that are the visual signature of Sprinkles' cupcakes, as well as a simple recipe for frosting. 16.2 oz. Also available in Red Velvet, Vanilla, Dark Chocolate, and Lemon. www.williams-sonoma.com and www.sprinklescupcakes.com

Oh, la, la...C'est tres chic! Jessie Steele makes it fashionable to wear aprons...

These aprons have a dressed-up feel that you will not want to take it off after baking. Show off your Hostess with the Mostess spirit with this line of super chic, fun and flirty designer aprons by Jessie Steele. Made of fine linen/cotton blend, cut in a classic A-line style, these aprons will make the hostess feel as delicious as the dessert!

While you are at it, coordinate your apron with the little helper in your life with an equally delicious child size apron available in select styles. www.cooking.com or www.jessiesteele.com

Jessie Steele Pink Paris Half-Apron

Jesse Steele Bib Josephine CafeToile Apron

Williams-Sonoma Silicups

Enjoy perfectly baked muffins or cupcakes time after time – without the fuss of greasing and flouring a pan or using paper liners. These reusable, stand-alone cups are made of durable silicone in pink, lavender, yellow and blue. Simply fill any number of the cups with batter and transfer them to a baking sheet. Dishwasher safe. 2 oz. cap.; 2 3/4" diam., 1 1/4" high. Set of 12, three of each color. www.williams-sonoma.com

The predicament of transporting frosted cupcakes has been resolved with these nifty containers...

Cupcake Couriers

Easily store and transport up to 36 cupcakes or muffins at a timewith no spilling or smearing. The rectangular, translucent plastic container holds three stackable cupcake trays. Each tray provides 12 deep cups to hold each cupcake secure. The individual trays measure 13-4/5 by 10-2/5 by 3-1/5 inches, and each cup measures about 3 by 3 by 1 inches. The cupcake courier also comes equipped with a comfortable carry handle on its cover and four bottom latches that securely hold the 12-1/2-by-16-inch base in place. Removing the three trays allows the cupcake courier to double as a cake courier. Invented and developed by a mother of two, the container fills the need for conveniently transporting cupcakes to children's parties, school gatherings, and other such functions. Available in an assortment of colors, the cupcake courier measures 12-1/2 by 16 by 11 inches. www.amazon.com

Clear Cup-A-Cakes

These clever containers will each hold a single cupcake or muffin, so it arrives at its destination in pristine condition - even if turned upside down along the way. Feel free to place a cupcake in your child or your own lunchbag. Made of durable polypropylene with an airtight seal that helps maintain freshness. Hand-wash. 3 1/2" x 3" x 3 1/2" high. Set of three. www.cupacakes.com or www.amazon.com

A Journey Aro
World through C
(Part 1)

ound the

Cakes...

Red Velvet Cupcakes

United States of America

Recipe by Johnnie Gabriel
Photograph by Vera Shepherd

Red Velvet Cake, very popular in the Southern United States, is a rich cake, with a distinctive dark red to bright red or red-brown color, and usually frosted and filled with cream cheese buttercream. The common ingredients include buttermilk, butter, flour, cocoa powder, and either beets or red food coloring.

If you are looking to make a sinfully deep red, moist, tender cake this is the recipe for you! Johnnie's Red Velvet Cake will remind you of the red velvet Armadillo Cake from the movie Steel Magnolias. To make into an all-American cake we turned Johnnie's Red Velvet Cake into cupcakes and topped with creamy smooth Cream Cheese Frosting but we left out the pecans, either way it's delicious!

Red Velvet Cupcakes

Cooking in the South Copyright © 2008 by Johnnie Gabriel. With permission of Thomas Nelson. All rights reserved.

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cocoa powder
1 1/2 cups vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups sugar
2 jumbo eggs or 3 large
1 teaspoon white vinegar
1 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 ounce red food coloring
1 cup buttermilk
Cream Cheese Frosting

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Using cupcake liners, prepare two 12-cup muffin pan. In a medium bowl sift the flour, baking soda, and cocoa powder. In a large bowl combine oil, sugar, and eggs, mixing well until thoroughly combined.In a small bowl mix the vinegar,vanilla, and red food coloring. Add to the oil mixture, blending well. Add the flour mixture to the oil mixture in three stages, alternating with the buttermilk and beginning and ending with the dry ingredients. Divide the batter among the twenty four cups. Bake for 20 to 24 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted near the center comes out clean. Remove the cupcakes from the oven, place on wire racks, and allow to cool 5 to 10 minutes in the pans. Remove the cupcakes onto the cake racks to fully cool.

Prepare the Cream Cheese Frosting:

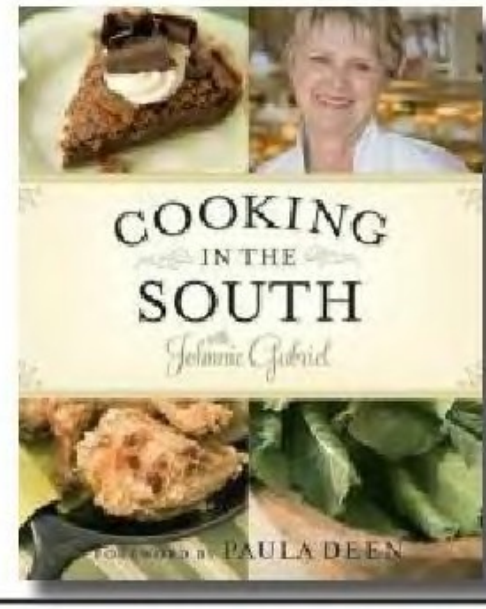
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter or margarine
1 1/2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, at room temperature
1 1/2 (16-ounce) packages confectioners' sugar, sifted
1 cup chopped pecans, lightly toasted (optional)
1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

In a large mixing bowl combine the butter and cream cheese, mixing well. Add confectioner's sugar in increments, scraping down the bottom and sides of the bowl once or twice between additions. Add the pecans and vanilla. Mix well.

When the cupcakes are fully cooled frost the cupcakes.

Johnnie Gabriel is known throughout north Georgia and beyond as "the cake lady". Johnnie began baking cakes to keep her kids in school after losing almost everything she owned in 1990. Eighteen hard-working years later, she's running Gabriel's Desserts, a four-time Best of Atlanta Award-winning restaurant that continues to grow. In Cooking in the South, Johnnie presents delectable, enticing Southern dishes from her Atlanta restaurant and bakery.

From simple Southern cooking starters to generous entrées and desserts, Johnnie makes down-home cooking simple and friendly, with savory recipes like Fried Okra, Hashbrown Casserole, Creamed Corn, Smothered Chicken, and She-Crab Soup. For the sweet-tooth, mouthwatering recipes like Peach Pound Cake, Caramel Frosting, Fresh Strawberry Cake, their most requested wedding cake at their retail store, Italian Cream Cake, another best seller, are just a few of her fabulous recipes that you will find in Cooking in the South. She offer tips for you to achieve perfection and stories to amuse you. It is more than a cookbook, it's an experience.



Up CLose and Personal with Johnnie Gabriel...

Best baking advice: When mixing a cake, you can't over mix (cream) the butter and sugar but when beginning to alternate the flour and liquid, you want to mix just enough to incorporate the dry ingredients. Over mixing a cake when adding the dry ingredients usually results in a "fallen" cake.

Alternative dream job: College literature job....someone would be paying me to read and share my thoughts with others.

Weirdest thing eaten: A dogfood sandwich... there is a story behind this. When I was young, my mother worked outside of the home. My sister, Kay, who was 7 years older, did not like taking care of me during the summer while Mother was at work. One of my family's quick supper meals was corned beef hash from the can. From time to time we would have leftovers and make sandwiches the next day. One day when I had particularly irritated my sister, she opened a can of dog food, made me a sandwich and told me it was leftover corned beef hash. Thankfully, after the first bite I knew the difference. Was she ever in trouble! I think it gave her such joy to see my disgust it was worth whatever punishment she received.

Favorite dessert: That's a really hard question....but tiramisu at Gabriel's because we use mascarpone cheese in a cooked "custard" filling.

What do you do when you are not baking...when I'm at the store and not baking, I like to visit with customers but usually spend a lot of time problem solving. When not working, I enjoy going out to dinner with friends or having friends in for dinner.

Favorite cookbook: I am a voracious purchaser of cookbooks so my favorite one is usually my newest one.

Where do you look for inspiration? For desserts and foods to serve at the store, I read cookbooks and any food article...for inspiration in my life, I like to read the Bible.

Favorite restaurant: Other than Gabriel's? Too many to name. I love Rosa Mexicano, Bubbalini's, Simpatico, Canoe, Houston's ...granted, I haven't traveled far and wide but really can appreciate quality ingredients and preparation.

Favorite mail-order source: I don't do much mail-order shopping...I love to go to stores and touch and feel the item whether it's a pot or a pan or a dress.

Favorite kitchen tools: A 6-7 quart mixer, good quality sharp knives and a food processor.

Best baking tip for the home baker: Have your oven calibrated often and be sure you have a heavy duty mixer.

Funniest kitchen incident: This is probably one of those "you had to be there moments": during the Christmas holidays we would work long hours and late into the night finishing cakes and pies. Often past midnight, there was the usual 3 or 4 who wouldn't leave me until the work was finished. By late night, our feet would be aching and we would sometimes pull out wooden stools to sit on while we finished cakes. Several of us were not on the lean side but one particularly heavy decorator upon returning to her work station hopped up on her stool. The legs on the stool just slowly gave way and we watched her disappear from sight as her stool gradually collapsed under her weight. She was so surprised she couldn't respond and ended flat on the floor still on the seat of the stool. Now this could have happened to almost any one of us, she just happened to be on the weaker stool. After 15-16 hours, 4 delirious women found this hilarious. Often during the holidays we needed a good "belly laugh".

If you are ever in Atlanta stop by at Gabriel's Desserts, have a slice of cake and say hello to Johnnie. 800 Whitlock Avenue, Suite 135, Marietta, GA 30064 • t. 770.427.9007 • f. 770.427.8986. Or call to have the cake delivered to your doorstep!

Get this...

A must have for every baker...

Escali V63 Pana Scale

To be a successful baker, you've got to measure ingredients precisely. This first home kitchen scale provides accurate volume measurements in cups and tablespoons! This patent-pending scale also offers a user-friendly display option incorporating fractions. amazon.com

Six reasons to have this scale:

- Comes preprogrammed for precise volume measurements of more than 150 ingredients
- Five Units of Measure: Cups, Tablespoons, Ounces, Pounds+ounces or Grams
- Measures volume in cups and tablespoons for a wide range of ingredients from 17 types of flour to eggs, corn syrup etc.
- Tare feature subtracts the container's weight to obtain the weight of its contents
- Stainless steel removable top makes clean-up fast and easy

KitchenAid Artisan 5-Quart Stand Mixers

This mixer's strong 325-watt motor delivers the power to handle the heaviest mixtures, and mix large batches easily.

The 5-quart polished stainless steel bowl with ergonomic handle is contoured to fit the hand and makes lifting the bowl more comfortable. All attachments are solidly constructed, and attach easily to the stand mixer. The flat beater, dough hook, and the professional wire whip add to the versatility of the mixer. The flat beater is the ideal accessory for mixing normal to heavy batters. The dough hook mixes and kneads yeast dough, saving both time and the effort of hand-kneading. The wire whip incorporates the maximum amount of air in whipped mixtures for fluffier whipped cream and angel food cakes. The pouring shield fits around the top of the bowl and prevents ingredient splash-out. The chute makes it convenient and easy to add ingredients. The tilt-back mixer head allows for easy access to bowl and beaters. A lock lever holds the mixer head securely in place and the bowl fastens tightly to the base. It is an outstanding mixer built to last.

Cuatro Leches Cake

Mexico

Pastel de Tres Leches is a recipe with a conflicting history. Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and other South and Central American countries claim it as their own. Basically it is a light, spongy cake soaked with a citrus-perfumed mixture of evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk, and cream. Sometimes it is topped with meringue, other times with whipped cream. Pastry Chef Dunia's version of tres leches cake, may not be as strictly authentic as the classic, but it's the best one I've encountered.

La Duni's Cuatro Leches Cake is a layered mantecada vanilla sponge cake, soaked in cuatro leches sauce, topped with caramelized swiss meringue and dotted with arequipe caramel reduction. Served with extra tres leches sauce and arequipe caramel.

Cuatro Leches Cake
Photograph courtesy of La Duni

Pastry Chef Dunia Borga was born in Bogota, Colombia from an Yugoslavian Father and a Colombian Mother. She moved to the US in 1974 and settled in Malibu, California. In 1987, she met Espartaco Borga at his Night club in Beverly Hills, where they fell in love, together they moved to Dallas, Texas in 1989.

In 2001, they co-founded the critical acclaimed **La Duni Latin Cafe**. On December 2003 the hospitality community of Dallas named Dunia "Best Pastry Chef " in D Magazines' Chefs' Choice Award survey. Together with her husband, they where selected as two of 25 chefs nationwide, to represent current and future trends of Latin Cooking at the James Beard Award ceremony in May 2004.

During 2004, they opened **La Duni Latin Kitchen & Baking Studio**. The menu stands apart from other Latin-inspired restaurants due to a strong Mestizo influence. Daily breakfast includes early morning coffee and fresh pastries. Lunch and dinner include Latin flavored foods such as grillados (grilled sandwiches), salads and family style meals including Pollo Criollo and Bife de Cuadril. Dunia's Signature Cakes, Venezuelan Chocolate Truffle Cake with hazelnut praline, almond tuilles, and the award-winning, Cuatro Leches Cake to name a few, look as elegant as European pastry but undeniably Latin-inspired are also be available as well as a full coffee bar and a "Mojito" bar. For more information, visit www.laduni.com

Cuatro Leches Cake

Recipe by Pastry Chef Dunia Borga

Vanilla Mantecada Cake

3 cups all purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon of salt
1 cup unsalted butter
2 cups sugar
4 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup milk
8" parchment paper liner
8" cake pan

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Sift baking powder, flour and salt. Cream butter in the mixer with the paddle attachment until very fluffy.
2. Add the sugar gradually until is all incorporated. Add one egg at a time, until blended using speed #1. Continue to mix, add vanilla extract, add 1/3 of flour mixture into the batter.
3. Add ½ cup of milk, then half of the left over flour mix, then the rest of milk, then the remaining flour until fully incorporated for about 1 minute or less, do not over mix.
4. Pour batter into an 8" buttered cake pan mold lined with parchment paper.
5. Place in lower 3rd rack of heated oven and bake for 55 to 70 minutes until the center of the cake springs back when touched and the sides come apart from the mold. It will smell done, when ready.

Dulce De Leche (Arequipe, Manjar Blanco)

1 Can of Eagle Condensed Milk

1. Boil the unopened can in a water bath inside a large cylinder strainer for 2 hours at medium high fire.
2. Carefully flip the can upside down every 45 minutes, while boiling.
3. Remove can from water, allow to cool off then open. Make sure you always maintain the can at least 2/3 covered with water or it may explode.

"A day without cake is a day without love..." Mom Duni

Arequipe Sauce

1 cup dulce de leche
1/2 cup warmed whole milk

Whisk all ingredients together and refrigerate.

3 Leches Sauce

1/2 cup evaporated milk
1/2 cup condensed milk
1/2 cup whipping cream

Whisk all ingredients together and refrigerate.

Caramelized Meringue

2 cups of Sugar
1 Tablespoon of Lemon juice
1 cup egg whites
½ teaspoon of vanilla extract
4 oz of water
Blow torch assembly

1. In small sauce pan, with a candy thermometer, bring water and sugar to softball level. Temperature 240 degrees F.
2. In a electric mixer bowl beat the egg whites until soft peaks form, using the whip attachment.
3. Add the sugar syrup slowly at medium speed. Once is all incorporated, bring the speed up to high, add lemon juice and vanilla, then mix well until hard peaks form.

Cake Assembly

1 8" baked and cooled mantecada cake
1 cup of 3 leches sauce
3/4 cup Arequipe Sauce
1 recipe of Meringue
Powder sugar for dusting
Blow torch, knife, sifter, spatula, cake card board, cake platter

1. Turn cake onto a card board and remove parchment paper.
2. Slice cake upside down in 3 even layers, use toothpicks to guide your knife.
3. Pierce each layer with a fork.
4. Brush 6 oz. of 3 leches sauce per layer, as you top the layers and reassemble the cake.
5. Ice cake with meringue using a spatula, make sure to create a 1/2 inch thick cover all around the cake and finish with peaks.
6. Torch the meringue until golden brown, make sure not to burn it.
7. Drizzle Arequipe sauce and dust with powder sugar.

Double Coconut Lamingtons

Australia

Recipe and Photograph by Susan Wolfe Bittle

One of the signature desserts of Australia, the Lamington is a simple sweet with origins as fuzzy as it looks. If you can believe any account (and there are many), the quaint little cubes of cake dipped in chocolate then rolled in coconut were named for Lord Lamington, the governor of Queensland in the late 1800s.

If you can further believe a particular account, Lord Lamington was said to have despised and dismissed his namesakes as "those bloody poofy woolly biscuits." I say to heck with the old coot, and calls 'em as I sees 'em: Bedlingtons.

Double Coconut Lamingtons

You can also use your favorite basic white cake recipe. Pound cake works especially well

Cake
Ingredients
2 large egg whites
1/3 cup sugar
2 cups cake flour
1 cup sugar
3 teaspoons baking powder
2 large egg yolks
1 cup milk
1/2 cup flavorless vegetable oil (such as safflower)
2 teaspoons coconut extract

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease two 8-inch square cake pans.

2. In a large bowl, whisk all dry ingredients together. In another, smaller bowl, beat the egg whites with the 1/3 cup sugar until thick, but not stiff. Add milk, egg yolks, oil and extract to the dry ingredients, beating for 3 minutes.

3. Gently fold or stir in the egg whites. Divide batter evenly between the cake pans.

4. Bake for approximately 25 minutes or until a skewer inserted in center of the cakes is clean when removed.

5. Cool cakes 10 minutes in pans before removing to rack to fully cool. To minimize crumbing and breakage, it is important that the cakes are firm and set before cutting into 2-inch cubes.

6. Chilling the cake before cutting also helps. Allow cubes to sit out several hours to become just a little stale before you dip them in the chocolate. This will correct once the frosting sets.

Frosting
Ingredients
1 cup powdered sugar
1/4 - 1/2 unsweetened cocoa powder (depending on your preference for light or dark flavor)
1/3 cup milk (or enough to make a smooth and pourable coating)
1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

With a whisk, beat all ingredients in a large bowl until very smooth and loose.

Assemble the cake
2 cups dessicated, unsweetened coconut, scattered in a large plate

1. Gently lower cake cubes one at a time into frosting, fully covering all sides using a rubber spatula. Do not let the spatula actually touch the cubes.

2. Carefully lift out each cube with a fork supporting its bottom (do not spear the cube), allowing excess frosting to drip back into bowl.

3. Place each cube in the plate of dessicated coconut, tossing and pressing the coconut into all sides of the cube. The coating will be very delicate.

4. Remove each cube with a fresh fork to a plate. Allow the finished cakes to set for at least an hour; the frosting will partially absorb into the cake, creating a firmer coating texture that is easier to handle and eat. Makes approximately 16 2-inch cakes.

Susan is an experienced cook who dishes eclectic vignettes, recipes and photos at her "nifty little galley kitchen" in NYC with her husband and cat. To find out what she has been cooking please visit, The Well Seasoned Cook at http://thewellseasonedcook.blogspot.com

Kueh Lapis

Indonesia

Kueh (possible spelling variation: kuih, kway, kue) Lapis, also known as 'kek lapis', 'kueh lapis legit', 'spek koek', 'spekkuk', is a traditional Indonesian layered spice cake, baked with an insanely amount of butter (that Paula Deen and Julia Child would give dumbs up) and egg yolks.

The heading on my mum's recipe said "Kway Lapis Spekkoek". I was intrigued by the term 'spek koek' and did a little research. It turns out that 'spek koek' stems from the days of the Dutch East India Company and Dutch colonization of Southeast Asia. In Dutch, 'koek' translates to cake and 'spek' translates to lard or bacon. It is conceivable that the term 'spek' refers to the cake layers, which resemble the layers in pork belly. But perhaps 'spek' refers to lard as an ingredient. This leads to another question: Was 'spek koek' brought by colonists to the Dutch East Indies or was 'kueh lapis legit' an indigenous sweet given a fancy Dutch name?

To make things even more interesting, kueh lapis is similar in concept to the German Baumkuchen (literally translated as "tree cake"), so named because the cake was traditionally made on a rotating spit and the cake's cross section resembled the age-rings in trees.

Whether Dutch, Hungarian, German or Indonesian in origin, baking kueh lapis is an extremely time-consuming task - each layer of cake batter is spread thinly onto the previous layers and baked for several minutes, but in the end it is well worth the effort.

Recipe and Photographs by Karen Chong

Kueh Lapis Spekkoek

by Karen Chong, a.k.a. Mad Baker, at www.madbaker.net

20 egg yolks
4 egg whites
500g salted butter
3 Tablespoons condensed milk
340g sugar
200g plain flour
2 teaspoons ground mixed spices
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
3 Tablespoons rum or brandy
90g pitted prunes, sliced into thin strips (optional)

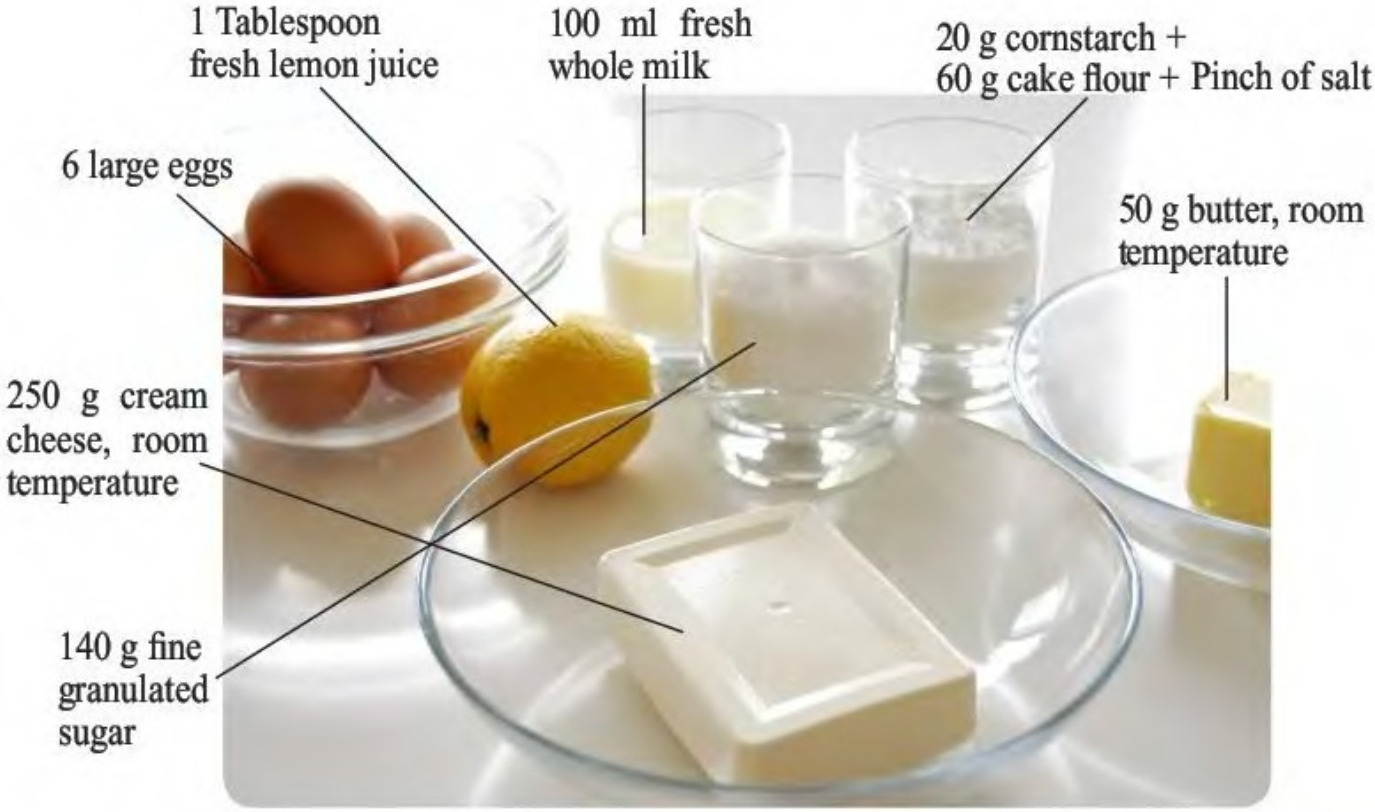
1. Butter the base of an 8" X 8" X 2.5" pan and line with baking parchment.
2. Pre-heat your oven, selecting the grill function.
3. Sift the plain flour and mixed spices together.
4. Beat the egg yolks and sugar together until pale yellow, thick and creamy
5. Cream the butter and condensed milk together until soft and fluffy. Add the creamed butter to the egg yolk mixture and mix until combined.
6. Beat the egg whites until medium firm peaks.
7. Fold in the egg whites, followed by the flour mixture into the rest of the batter.
8. Stir in the vanilla essence and rum until well-combined.
9. Spread a thin layer of batter onto the parchment paper.
10. Grill for 7 - 8 mins on the lowest rack in your oven or until lightly golden brown.
11. Remove cake pan from oven and press the baked layer down lightly with a metal fondant smoother. Prick all over the layer of cake with a toothpick.
12. Repeat steps 9 to 11 for each layer. (Optional: Add prunes on every second or third layer).
13. For the last layer, turn the oven down to 180 degrees C and bake on middle rung for 15 minutes or until golden brown.
14. Remove from oven and run a paring knife along the edges of the cake pan.
15. Turn the kueh lapis out of the pan and remove the baking parchment.
16. Flip cake back upright and let cool.

Japanese Soufflé Cheesecake

Japan

Recipe and Photographs by Steve Ho

This Japanese cheesecake is light, soft, not too sweet...Just heavenly!



1. Line the base of a 22 cm/8-inch round springform pan with parchment paper and wrapped with aluminum foil. Preheat oven at 150°C/300°F.
2. Sift flour & cornstarch in a bowl, set aside
3. Separate the egg yolks in a bowl. Place the egg whites in a separate bowl, set aside.
4. Mix butter & cream cheese with spatula until well combined.
5. Add milk, egg yolks, lemon juice and stir until combined.
6. Incorporate the flour mixture in the cheese mixture.
7. Beat egg whites & sugar until soft peaks form. Fold the whites delicately to the cheese batter, do not overmix.
8. Pour the batter in the prepared pan.

9. Place the pan in a baking tray and fill with hot water up to half height of the cake pan
10. Bake in waterbath for 60 minutes, until set and golden brown.

Visit Steve Ho at www.flickr.com/photos/shgarden/ to see more of his breathtaking photos.

Toucinho do Ceu

Portugal

Recipe by Chef Leticia Schwartz
Photograph by Vera Shepherd

This recipe was inspired by a visit to one of my favorite restaurants in Rio, called Antiquarius. It serves very traditional Portuguese food, and every time I go there I ask for Toucinho do Ceu - a classic Portuguese cake based on almonds and egg yolks. Unlike most almond cakes which fall into the creamy batter category, this cake will surprise you with its technique: make a simple syrup and cook the ground almonds in the simple syrup. The rest is easy: just add eggs and egg yolks and you're done. It is important to use a relatively big mold for the amount of batter. You want this cake to be short, about the height of a brownie. The result is a very moist almond cake, yet unknown in this country. It is good to serve as dessert or as a snack. It is easy to make and easy to travel. Hope you like it!

Toucinho Do Ceu
by Chef Leticia Schwartz
Yield: about 8-10 people

½ cup water
1 ¼ cup sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 ¾ cup skinless ground almonds
4 Tablespoons (2 ounces) unsalted butter
5 large egg yolks
2 whole large eggs
1 teaspoon almond extract (or Amaretto)
1 teaspoon orange zest, finely grated

1. Butter a 8-inch square cake mold, place the parchment paper on the bottom and butter and flour the parchment. Preheat the oven to 325°F. In a small pan, cook the butter until the solids at the bottom of the pan begin to brown, turn off the heat and pou in a heatproof bowl. Set aside.

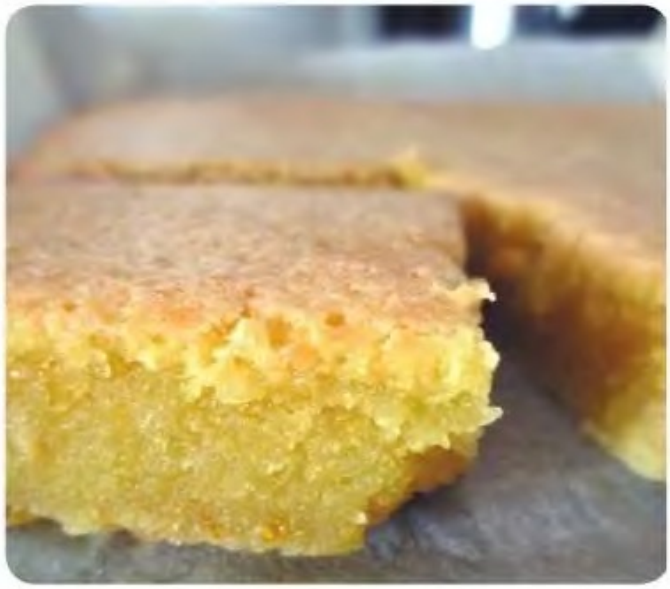
2. In a big sauce pan, boil together the water, sugar, and salt. As soon as it comes to a full boil, add the ground almonds. Using a wooden spoon, keep mixing, over low-medium heat. Stir constantly until it starts to thicken, leaving a trace after the wooden spoon in a way that you should be able to see the bottom of the pan, about 2 minutes.

Editor's Note: It is essential to use the parchment paper or else the cake will stick on the pan. The orange zest complements the almonds wonderfully. This is a dense, very moist, quick and easy delicious flourless cake with a nice crust on top. Try it and let me know what you think.

3. Remove the pan from the heat and add the melted butter. Mix well with a wooden spoon.

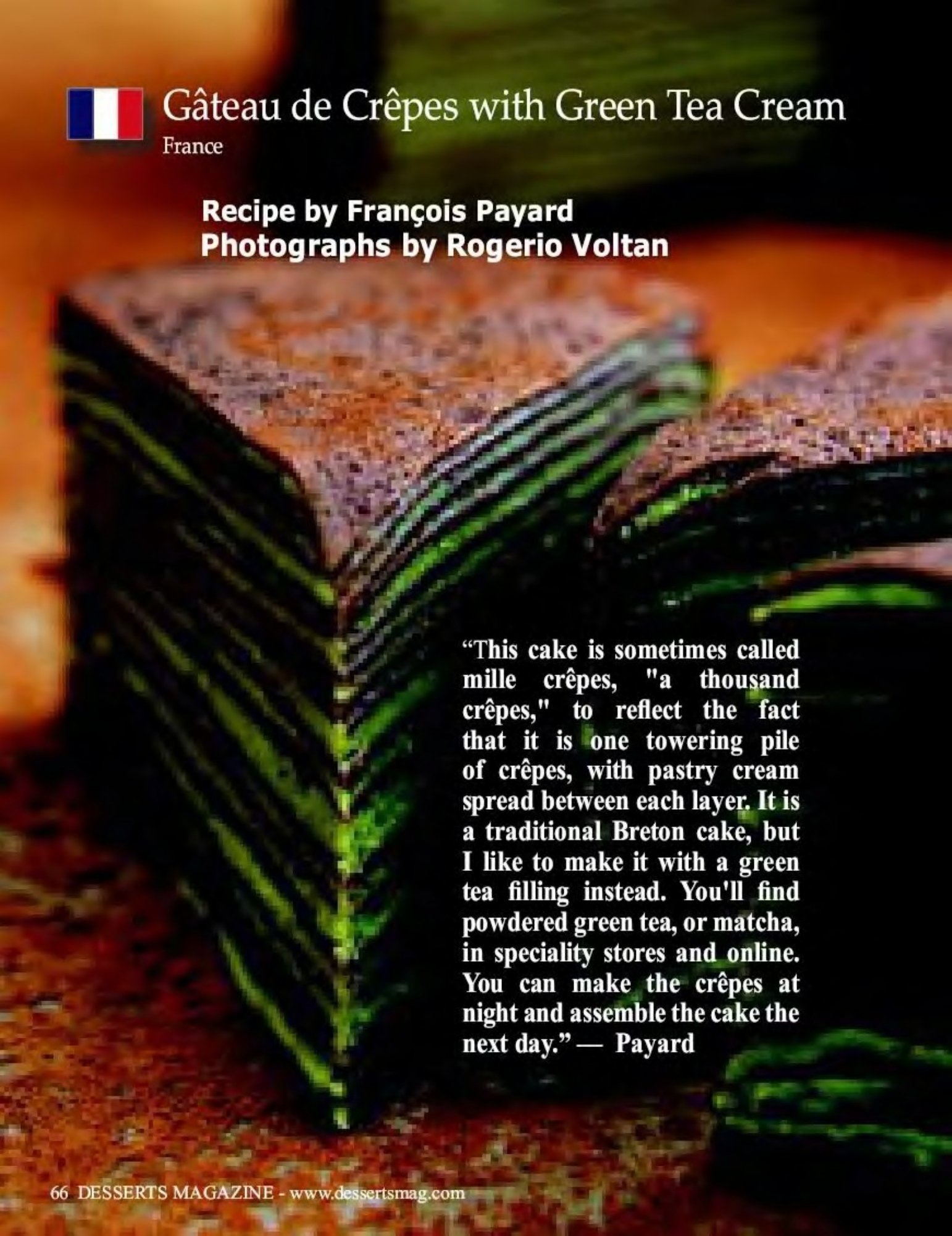
4. In another bowl, lightly whisk together the yolks and eggs. Incorporate the egg mixture into the almond mixture. Add the amaretto or almond extract and the orange zest.

5. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake for 30 minutes or until the cake is firm, and the center is not jiggly. The top should turn a medium golden brown. Let it cool inside the mold.



6. After cooled, remove from the mold, peel the parchment paper. Serve at room temperature. For an extra touch, dust with confectioners' sugar and lightly sweetened creme fraiche.

About Chef Leticia Schwartz... Leticia was born and raised in Brazil, is the founder of Chef Leticia a culinary instruction and catering company. She teaches Brazilian cuisine out of her own kitchen, in Weston, CT. She also teaches in New York at The French Culinary Institute and The Institute of Culinary Education. Visit www.chefleticia.com for more information.



Gâteau de Crêpes with Green Tea Cream

France

Recipe by François Payard
Photographs by Rogerio Voltan

"This cake is sometimes called mille crêpes, "a thousand crêpes," to reflect the fact that it is one towering pile of crêpes, with pastry cream spread between each layer. It is a traditional Breton cake, but I like to make it with a green tea filling instead. You'll find powdered green tea, or matcha, in speciality stores and online. You can make the crêpes at night and assemble the cake the next day." — Payard

Gâteau de Crêpes with Green Tea Cream

Chocolate Epiphany Copyright © 2008 by François Payard. With permission of Clarkson Potter/ Publishers. All rights reserved.

Makes one 8-inch cake; serves 8

Chocolate Crêpes

2 cups plus 2 tablespoons (220g) all purpose flour
1/3 cup (30g) Dutch-processed cocoa powder
1/2 cup (100g) sugar
Pinch of salt
8 large eggs
2 cups plus 1 tablespoon (500g) whole milk
Grated zest of 2 oranges
10 tablespoons (5 oz. or 150g) unsalted butter, browned
1 cup (250g) heavy cream
Vegetable oil, for the pan

Green Tea Pastry Cream

2 cups plus 1 tablespoon (500 g) whole milk
2 teaspoons (10g) powdered green tea
1/2cupplus2tablespoons (120g) sugar
5 tablespoons (40g) cornstarch
6 large egg yolks
4 tablespoons (2oz.; 60g) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
1 cup (250g) heavy cream

Make the crêpes: Combine the flour, cocoa powder, sugar, and salt in a large mixing bowl. In another bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, and orange zest. Incorporate them gradually into the dry ingredients, whisking constantly with one hand as you pour them with the other. Doing this slowly will prevent lumps from forming. Whisk in the butter, then the cream. Strain the batter over a bowl to make sure that it is smooth, then whisk it again so that it is thorougly combined. Cover the batter, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

Whisk the batter well. Place a small crêpe pan or nonstick skillet (about 8 inches in diameter) over medium heat. Pour about 2 teaspoons vegetable oil in the pan to grease it. Once it is hot, use a 1/4 cup measuring cup or a small ladle to pour a little less than 1/4 cup of batter in the pan. There should be just enough batter in the pan to coat the bottom in a thin layer. Tilt the pan in a circular motion so that the batter is evenly spread in the pan.

After about 2 minutes, the edges of the crêpe should start firming up. Use a spatula to lift a side of the crêpe and flip it over. Cook on the other side for about 1 minute, then remove the crêpe to a plate. Repeat the process until all of the batter is used, piling the crêpes one on top of the other as they are cooked. If the crêpes start to stick to the pan, add a little more oil. Cover the stack of crêpes with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until cool, up to 1 day.

Make the Pastry Cream: Line a shallow pan, such as a 9-inch square cake pan or a smalll rimmed baking sheet, with plastic wrap. Bring the milk to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Whisk in the green tea powder.

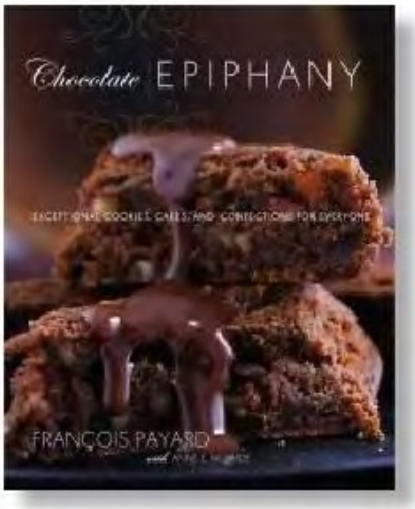
Meanwhile, combine the sugar and cornstarch in a medium bowl, and whisk in the yolks. Continue whisking until the yolks turn a very pale yellow. Slowly pour a fourth of the milk into the yolk mixture, whisking constantly to keep the yolks from curdling. Once the milk is well incorporated, return the mixture to the saucepan over medium heat, and cook, whisking constantly and scraping the bottom and sides of the pot with the whisk to prevent lumps from forming, until it becomes very thick and bubbles start popping from the center of the pan for at least 20 seconds. You need to bring it to a boil so that the cornstarch gets activated.

Remove from the heat and whisk in the butter. Pour the pastry cream in the prepared pan and cover it with plastic wrap to prevent a skin from forming. Let it cool to room temperature, and then refrigerate it until it is completely cool, up to 1 day ahead.

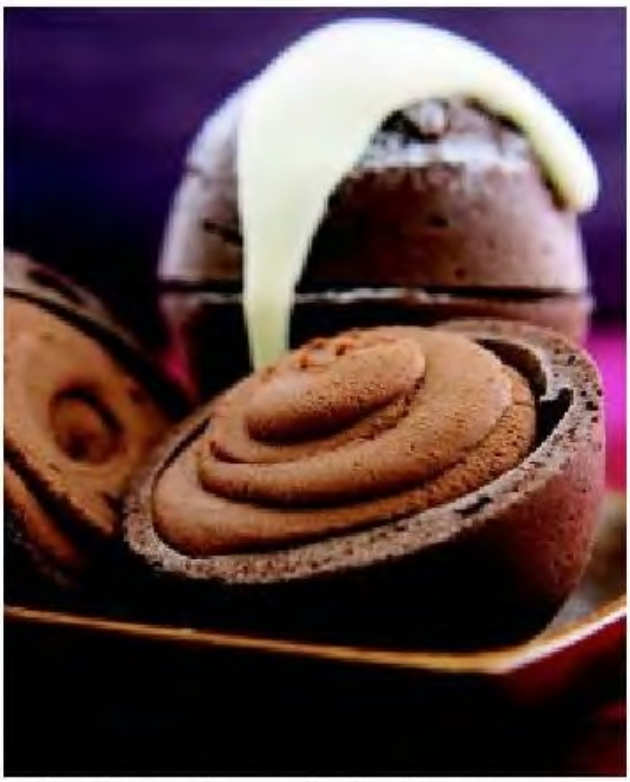
Whip the heavy cream at medium speed in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment until it holds soft peaks. Whisk the pastry cream to a creamy texture, then gently fold in the whipped cream with spatula.

Assemble the Cake: Place one of the cooled crepes on a serving platter. With a small offset spatula, spread a very thin layer (about 1/16 inch) of the green tea pastry cream over the crepe, going all the way to the edges. Place another crepe on top and repeat the process until the cake is 2 to 3 inches tall. Refrigerate for about 1 hour before serving, up to 6 hours ahead, so that the cake has time to set.

IN CHOCOLATE EPIPHANY, François Payard, the famed French pastry chef/owner of Payard Pâtisserie & Bistro, devoted his creative powers solely to chocolate. Payard shares 100 recipes for home cooks of every level in Chocolate Epiphany. Stunning and mouthwatering desserts await you on every page. Thanks to the clear and thorough recipes, such as Bittersweet Chocolate Sorbet, Chocolate Sticky Toffee Pudding, are not only delicious but also accessible. And for the ambitious, Chocolate Coconut Caramel Cake, Chocolate Pavlovas with Chocolate Mascarpone Mousse, Chocolate Yuzu-Cream Cheese Chocolate Layer Cake, or Chocolate Creme Catalane Cake could be the perfect ending to an extravagant dinner party. This book has many breathtaking photography with almost every recipe. And you'll appreciate the many expert tips, including what equipment pastry chefs can't live without, as well as the brands of chocolate to use, where exactly to purchase it and how to melt it. How's that for epiphany?



Chocolate Creme Catalane Cake p.185



Chocolate Pavlovas with Chocolate Mascarpone Mousse p.115

Princess Torte

Sweden

Recipe by Greg Patent
Photograph by Helen Dujardin

This is a spectacular cake! It has three tender sponge layers. The layers are spread with raspberry jam and covered with a combination of custard and whipped cream. Then the whole cake is covered with a thin pale green layer of marzipan. For a decadent variation brush the layers with framboise before filling and arrange a layer of fresh raspberries over the raspberry jam. To find out more about how Helen did this recipe please visit her at http://tartelette.blogspot.com/

Princess Torte

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Custard

2 Tablespoons cornstarch
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 1/2 cups half-and-half
3 large egg yolks
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

In a small bowl whisk together the cornstarch, sugar, 1/2 cup of the half-and-half, and the egg yolks until smooth. Heat the remaining 1 cup half-and-half in a medium saucepan over medium heat until it is scalded — you will see steam rising from the surface and small bubbles around the edges.

Very gradually, add the hot half-and-half to the egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly. Scrape the mixture into the saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a heatproof rubber spatula, until the custard thickens, about 5 minutes.

Because it is so thick, the custard will never actually boil, and as it heats, it will gradually become lumpy, especially on the bottom. Just keep stirring, going all around the sides and bottom of the pan with the spatula. As it thickens further, the custard will look like scrambled eggs.

At this point, switch to the whisk and stir, do not beat, until very smooth. Cook, whisking, for 1 to 2 minutes more. Remove the pan from the heat, scrape the custard into a medium bowl and stir in the vanilla. Press a piece of plastic wrap directly onto the surface of the custard to prevent a skin from forming, and cool for 30 minutes at room temperature, then refrigerate until very cold. (The custard can be made a day ahead.)

Cake

Fine dry breadcrumbs for the pan
1/2 cup sifted unbleached all purpose flour
1/2 cup potato starch flour (spooned into the cup and leveled)
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
4 large eggs, separated
1/8 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

Adjust the oven rack to the lower third position and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Butter a 9-ich spring-form pan or coat it with cooking spray. Line the bottom of the pan with a round of cooking parchment or waxed paper and butter the paper. Dust the inside of the pan with fine dry breadcrumbs and tap out the excess crumbs.

Sift the flour, potato starch, and baking powder together twice.

In a large bowl, whip the egg whites and salt with an electric mixer on medium speed until the whites are shiny and form stiff peaks when the beaters are raised. Do not overbeat. The whites should be smooth, not lumpy. Beating on medium speed, sprinkle in about one-quarter of the sugar, then add 1 egg yolk and beat for about 10 seconds. Repeat the process 3 more times, then continue beating a few minutes more, until the mixture is thick and pale and forms a slowly dissolving ribbon when the beaters are raised.

Using a large rubber spatula, gently fold in the flour mixture in 4 additions, only until no dry ingredients show. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, and gently smooth the top.

Bake for about 30 minutes, until the cake is golden brown and springs back when gently pressed and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool the cake in its pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Run the blade of a small sharp knife around the sides of the cake to release from the pan, if necessary, and carefully remove the sides of the pan. Cover the cake with a wire rack and invert. Remove the bottom of the pan and the paper liner. Cover the cake with another wire rack and invert again to cool completely right side up.

To Assemble the Torte

2 1/2 cups heavy cream (use 3 cups if you want a thicker topping)
3 to 4 tablespoons seedless raspberry jam

Marzipan Coating

Two 7 oz packages marzipan or 14 ounces homemade marzipan (p.331)
Green food coloring
Confectioners' sugar for dusting

To assemble the torte, use a long sharp serrated knife to split the cake into 3 equal layers; set aside.

Whip the cream in a large bowl until it is thick and holds a firm shape. Transfer one-third of the cream to a small bowl, cover, and refrigerate. Remove the chilled custard from the refrigerator; it will be very thick. Whisk it vigorously until it is smooth and creamy. Fold half the remaining whipped cream into the chilled custard, and then fold the custard into the remaining cream.

Arrange 4 strips of waxed paper in a square pattern around the edges of a serving platter. Set the bottom cake layer, cut side up, onto the platter, with the edges of the waxed paper strips just under the edge of the cake. Spread the raspberry jam onto the cake, and then spread half the custard cream mixture evenly over the jam. Invert the top cake layer onto the custard cream so that its cut side is facing up. Spread the remaining custard cream over the layer and place the remaining cake layer on top. Spread about one-quarter of the reserved refrigerated whipped cream in a very thin layer around the sides of the cake. Scrape the remaining cream onto the top of the cake and spread evenly with a narrow metal spatula. Carefully remove the waxed paper strips by pulling them toward you gently by a short end. Refrigerate the cake.

To make the marzipan coating, break the marzipan into small pieces into a medium bowl. Add 3 or 4 drops of green food coloring and knead it into the marzipan with your hands to tint the marzipan a shade of pale green. The marzipan is stiff, so be patient. Add a drop or two more of food coloring if necessary, but don't tint the marzipan a bright green. Dust your work surface with confectioners' sugar. Shape the marzipan into a 6-inch disk; place it on the work surface, and turn to coat both sides lightly with sugar. Roll the marzipan to a circle about 16 inches in diameter and less than 1/8 inch thick. Turn the marzipan over during the rolling and dust it with the confectioners' sugar as necessary to prevent sticking. (If you have 18-inch-wide plastic wrap, you can roll the marzipan between two sheets of it instead.)

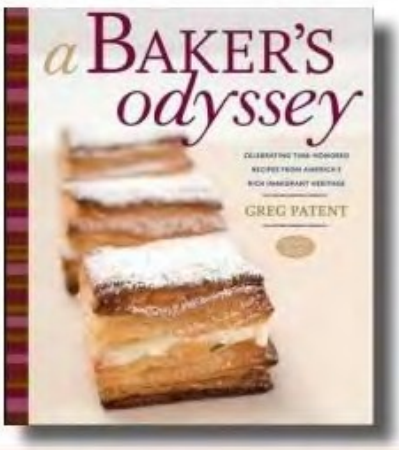
Remove the cake from the refrigerator. Fold the circle of marzipan in half and gently set it on top of the cake, with the fold on the center. Carefully unfold the marzipan so that it drapes over the cake, then fold the edges of the marzipan over and press it gently so it adheres to the sides of the cake, covering the cake completely. Try to avoid wrinkling the marzipan. Use a sharp knife to trim away the excess marzipan so that the edges are flush with the platter. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

To serve, dust the top of the cake with confectioners' sugar. Use a sharp knife to score portions in the marzipan and then cut the cake.

Storing

The texture of the cake actually improves after 2 or 3 days in the refrigerator. To store leftover cake, cover the cut edges with plastic wrap.

A Baker's Odyssey is a rich collection of recipes and culinary history originating from thirty-two different nations through Patent travels around the U.S. Greg Patent is a baker, teacher and James Beard Award winner for 2002's Baking in America. The instructions are clear and very detailed, with alternate versions for mixing by a stand mixer or a food processor, or by hand. The recipes are easy enough for home cooks of any level to master, and include everything from Eastern European Rugelach, and Nigerian Chin-Chin to French Gateau Basque. This book is accompanied by an hour-long DVD in which Patent provides hands-on instruction in making Strudel, Pretzels, Cannoli, Kransakake, and much more. A great reference book to add to your collection.



Boschendal Pudding

South Africa

"This ultra rich, buttery dessert with caramel overtones is a speciality of Bryony Schwan, who has been making it for almost fifteen years. It is really a cake with a pudding like consistency, which is created by pouring a hot cream-and-butter sauce over the cake as soon as it comes out of the oven." To find out more about how Paola did this recipe please visit her at http://inmylife-paola.blogspot.com/

Recipe by Greg Patent
Photograph by Paola Westbeek

Boschendal Pudding

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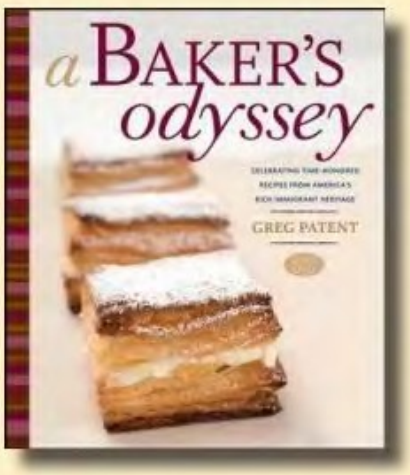
Bryony got the recipe from the Boschendal Winery outside of Cape Town. Her ancestors came to South Africa in the late 1700s from Europe. She was born in Zimbabwe but spent many years in South Africa before immigrating to the United States. Bryony has had great success making the cake on camping trips. She bakes it in a Dutch oven over hot coals with more coals piled onto the lid. "More people have asked me for this recipe than any other," she said. Once you taste it, you'll see why.

This is excellent with fresh berries or sliced peaches. For a big crowd, you can double the recipe and bake it in a 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan. Serve small portions.



CAKE

1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
Pinch of Salt
1 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg
2 tablespoons apricot jam
1 cup whole milk
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted and still hot
1 teaspon distilled white vinegar

SAUCE

12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks), unsalted butter
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup boiling water

TO MAKE THE CAKE, adjust an oven rack to the center position and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Butter an 8 x 3-inch one piece round cheesecake pan or cake pan or a 2-qt souffle dish. (The pan must be deep to prevent the sauce from overflowing.)

IN A MEDIUM BOWL, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt.

IN ANOTHER MEDIUM BOWL, beat the sugar and egg with an electric mixer on medium-high speed for about 5 minutes, until the mixture is very thick and very pale. Add the jam and beat it in briefly on low speed. Still on low speed, add the dry ingredients in four additions alternately with the milk, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients, and beating only until the batter is smooth.

IN A SMALL CUP, combine the melted butter and vinegar, and stir into the batter. The consistency of the batter will resemble heavy cream. Scrape into the prepared pan.

BAKE FOR 45 TO 60 MINUTES, until the cake is golden brown and has a toasty aroma and a wooden skewer inserted into the center comes out clean.

MEANWHILE, when the pudding is almost done, prepare the sauce. Melt the butter in a medium heavy saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the cream, sugar, and boiling water and stir to dissolve the sugar. Keep the sauce hot over very low heat.

AS SOON AS the cake comes out of the oven, pour the hot sauce slowly over it. Let stand until the liquid is completely absorbed. This will take a few minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature, using a sharp knife to cut portions. The dessert is best soon after it is made.

Green Tea and Chocolate Tiramisu

Italy

Recipe and Photographs by Fanny Zanotti

Tiramisù are one of those entremets I came across quite early in life; easy to make, a treat to eat, and perhaps most importantly, versatile.

The classic involves mascarpone, eggs, and coffee-drenched savoiardi; a trusted timeless recipe, which we all love. However, I must confess I have developed some kind of severe addiction to a green tea and chocolate version.

Picture a matcha green tea mascarpone mousse encased in soft chocolate biscuits à la cuillère. I find the slightly grassy and bitter flavour of the green tea very satisfying against the richness of both the mascarpone and chocolate. Here, I'll share the recipe for homemade biscuits à la cuillère – or savoiardi, as they call them across the Alps – and tiramisu. To find more about Fanny visit her at www.foodbeam.com

Green Tea and Chocolate Tiramisu
Serves 8

For the Biscuits à la Cuillère

6 egg whites
160g + 40g caster sugar
5 egg yolks
270g plain flour
30g cocoa powder

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C, and line three baking sheets with parchment paper or silicon mats.

2. In a clean and dry bowl, whip the egg whites until they form soft peaks. Increase the speed and throw in 160g of caster sugar. Continue to whip until the sugar grains have dissolved, and the meringue is shiny and fluffy.

3. In another bowl, mix the egg yolks and 40g of caster sugar until thick, then incorporate this mixture into the meringue, taking care not to let air out.

4. Mix in the sieved flour and cocoa powder until just blended.

5. Fill a piping bag fitted with a plain 1cm nozzle, and pipe 5cm wide circles. Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes, or until firm to the touch.

6. Using a sharp cookie cutter, cut out circles as wide as the glasses you plan to serve your tiramisu in.

For the Mousse

100 + 40g caster sugar
3 eggs, separated
250g mascarpone cheese
15g matcha green tea, sieved

1. Place 100g of sugar with two tablespoons of water in a pan over high heat to make a simple sugar syrup. As soon as the syrup reaches 115°C, start whipping the egg whites. When the syrup is 118°C, reduce your mixer speed, and pour the boiling syrup over the thick egg whites. Increase the speed to high, and beat until the bowl is no longer hot.

2. Meanwhile, beat the egg yolks and sugar until thick and fluffy, then fold in the mascarpone and green tea. Now, gently incorporate the meringue into the mascarpone mixture, without deflating it.

For the Ganache

150g double cream
150g dark chocolate, chopped

Bring the cream to a boil. Off the heat, incorporate the chopped chocolate, mixing until smooth. Keep at 45°C for easy handling.

For the Montage

Eight 5cm wide glasses
16 Biscuits à la Cuillère disks
Green Tea Mascarpone Mousse
Chocolate Ganache

Pipe the mousse into the prepared glasses alternating layers of mousse and biscuit. Top with ganache and reserve in the fridge for at least 10 hours.

Sacher Torte

Austria

Recipe and Photograh by Celine Steen

Did You Know...
The Original Sacher-Torte made it into the Guinness Book of Records in 1998, the Hotel Sacher Wien made a cake with a diameter of 2.5 meters!

The world-famous Original Sacher-Torte was invented in 1832 by Franz Sacher. The Original Sacher-Torte is a two layers chocolate cake, with a thin layer of apricot jam in the middle, under a chocolate icing and served with a dollop of unsweetened whipped cream. The cake became popular throughout Vienna ever since. Try Celine's version of Sacher Torte made with a thin layer of raspberry jam in middle. You won't even know that this cake is vegan!

Vegan Sacher Torte
Recipe by Celine Steen

I have tried for the longest time to recreate my mom's fantastic take on Sacher Torte that she used to make when I was a child, and I think this would be it. The cake tastes even better when it has spent some time in the fridge, so feel free to make it the day before you're going to eat it. If you are using a 9-inch round cake pan, you might want to double the cake recipe and bake it all in two separate pans in order to place one on top of the other with the raspberry preserves in the middle. I used a 6″ x 2″ round cake pan which allowed me to slice it in two and have a smaller cake.

1 cup vanilla or plain soy yogurt
1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
1/2 cup vegetable oil
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1 teaspoons chocolate extract
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, lightly spooned & leveled
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 teaspoons baking powder
pinch sea salt

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Prepare the cake pan with non stick cooking spray. (**Note:** again, I used a 6″ x 2″ round cake pan, so you might have to check your cake after 30 minutes to see if it's done, by inserting a toothpick in the center of it.)

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together soy yogurt, sugar, oil, and extracts, until emulsified.
3. In a large bowl, sift together flour, cocoa, sea salt, and baking powder.

4. Add wet ingredients to dry. stir well, until no lumps are left but without overmixing. Pour batter into cake pan.

5. Bake for 40 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean. Let cool in pan on a cooling rack, before attempting to unmold.

1/4-1/3 cup raspberry preserves (other favorite preserves will work fine!)

Slice cake in half if you used a 6″ x 2″ round cake pan, or simply spread pre-stirred preserves on top of one of the cakes. Place second half of the cake on top of it.

1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
2 Tablespoons powdered sugar
1 Tablespoons margarine

1. Melt the chocolate chips and the margarine in the microwave, keep a close eye on the chocolate chips and stir the chips often to make sure they don't burn.

2. Let the melted chocolate cool. Add sugar and stir vigorously until a thick frosting is obtained. Make sure there are no lumps.

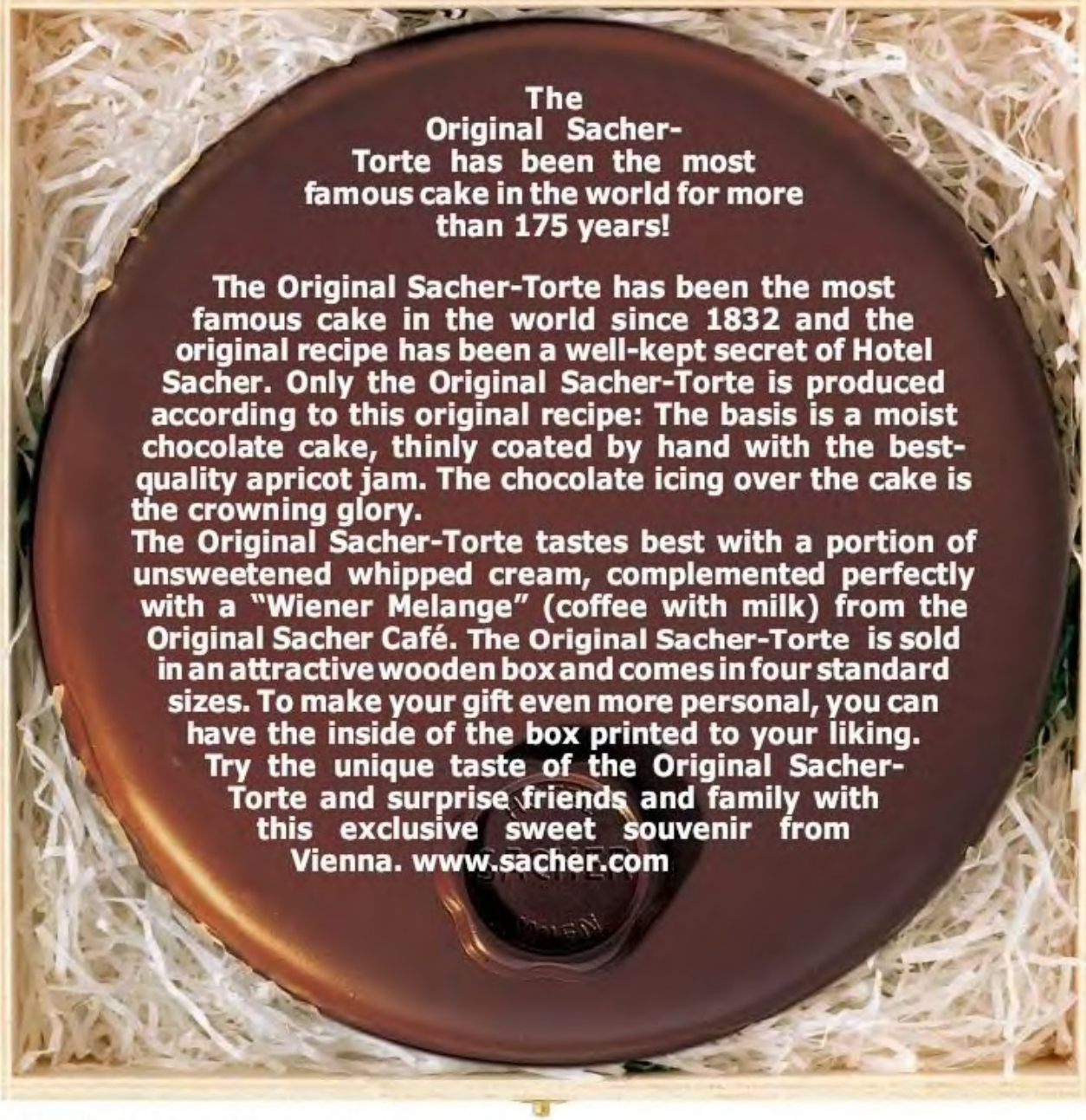
3. Turn the cake, flatter side up to decorate it. Quickly spread a thin layer of the icing on the top and sides of the cake. Chill for a few hours.

Celine is a Swiss expat living in the States with her husband and two cats. Her motto when it comes to food and its preparation: "The simpler it is, the happier I am." Visit Have Cake, Will Travel! at http://havecakewilltravel.com/

Taste this...

Hotel Sacher
WIEN

You do not need to go to Austria to have the **Original Sacher-Torte**... You can have it delivered!



The Original Sacher-Torte has been the most famous cake in the world for more than 175 years!

The Original Sacher-Torte has been the most famous cake in the world since 1832 and the original recipe has been a well-kept secret of Hotel Sacher. Only the Original Sacher-Torte is produced according to this original recipe: The basis is a moist chocolate cake, thinly coated by hand with the best-quality apricot jam. The chocolate icing over the cake is the crowning glory.

The Original Sacher-Torte tastes best with a portion of unsweetened whipped cream, complemented perfectly with a "Wiener Melange" (coffee with milk) from the Original Sacher Café. The Original Sacher-Torte is sold in an attractive wooden box and comes in four standard sizes. To make your gift even more personal, you can have the inside of the box printed to your liking. Try the unique taste of the Original Sacher-Torte and surprise friends and family with this exclusive sweet souvenir from Vienna. www.sacher.com

Bake ~~Cook~~ for the Cure!

KitchenAid KSM150PSPK Komen Foundation Artisan Series 5-Quart Mixer, Pink

In support of a cure for breast cancer, pink is a wonderful color for the celebrity appliance in your kitchen! When you purchase this great appliance, KitchenAid will donate fifty dollars to The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Cook for the Cure! More is more sometimes, at least in the world of small appliances. and such is the case with the KitchenAid Artisan mixer. It has a tilting head, like the KSM90, but it has a larger 5 qt. capacity bowl. It also gives you more oomph, as in 325 watts of cookie dough busting power. What's not to love? If you've been considering a stand mixer, this may be the perfect "starter model" for you. $286.25. WWW.AMAZON.COM

KitchenAid Pink Cover

The Pink Stand Mixer Cover represents the pink ribbon that serves as a symbol of the fight against breast cancer. KitchenAid, through their Cook for the Cure® program will donate 10% of the retail price* to Susan G. Komen for the Cure for each Pink Stand Mixer Cover purchased then registered at www.cookforthecure.com to generate a donation.

Protect your KitchenAid® Stand Mixer from dust, grease and kitchen debris with this heavyweight, quilted cotton cover. Sized to fit any tilt-head or bowl-lift model. Machine wash, dry flat. 17.5"H x 23"W x 12"D when fully expanded. Imported. $24.99. WWW.AMAZON.COM

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure promise: to save lives and end breast cancer forever by empowering people, ensuring quality of care for all and energizing science to find the cures. For more information on breast health and breast cancer, please visit www.komen.org or call 1.800 I'M AWARE.

Zebra Cake

Azerbaijan

Recipe and Photographs by Farida Buyuran

This is just a beautiful cake. I like looking at Zebra cake more that eating it even though it is incredibly delicious. I am not the original creator of this cake, although I wish I were. I heard that Zebra cake is very popular in Eastern Europe. It could have traveled all the way to Azerbaijan from there a long time ago. Who knows... Zebra Cake goes perfectly well with a cup of strong black tea. By the way, Azerbaijanis are big on tea. It is the most popular drink in the country. We always drink our tea with something sweet, such as a cube of sugar, preserves, sweets and/or cakes.

Looking at the picture you may think zebra patterns are difficult to make. Believe me, they are not. If you follow the recipe carefully you will get similar results, if not better. Zebra Cake is easy and fun to make, it's beautiful and just irresistibly delicious! Enjoy your Zebra Cake!

Nush Olsun!

Farida

ZEBRA CAKE

Recipe by Farida Buyuran

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 40 minutes
Makes one 9-inch (23 cm) cake

4 large eggs, at room temperature
1 cup (8 oz / 250 g) granulated sugar
1 cup (8 fl oz / 250 ml) milk, at room temperature
1 cup (8 fl oz / 250 ml) oil (corn, vegetable or canola is fine)
1/3 teaspoon vanilla powder
2 cups (8 oz / 250 g) all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon (equals 3 teaspoons) baking powder (if not available, substitute with 1 teaspoon baking soda)
2 tablespoons dark cocoa powder (Dark zebra patterns won't stand out with light cocoa powder)

You'll also need: mixing bowls, electric mixer or wire whisk, 9 inch (23 cm) non-stick round cake pan.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Lightly grease the pan with oil. If you don't have non-stick baking pan, grease whatever pan you have then line it with parchment paper (baking paper).
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine eggs and sugar. Using a hand-held electric mixer or wire whisk beat until the mixture is creamy and light in color
3. Add milk and oil, and continue beating until well blended..
4. In a separate bowl, combine and mix flour, vanilla powder and baking powder. Gradually add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients and beat just until the batter is smooth and the dry ingredients are thoroughly incorporated. DO NOT OVERBEAT to prevent air pockets from forming in the batter. This is the consistency of the batter: neither very thick not too loose.

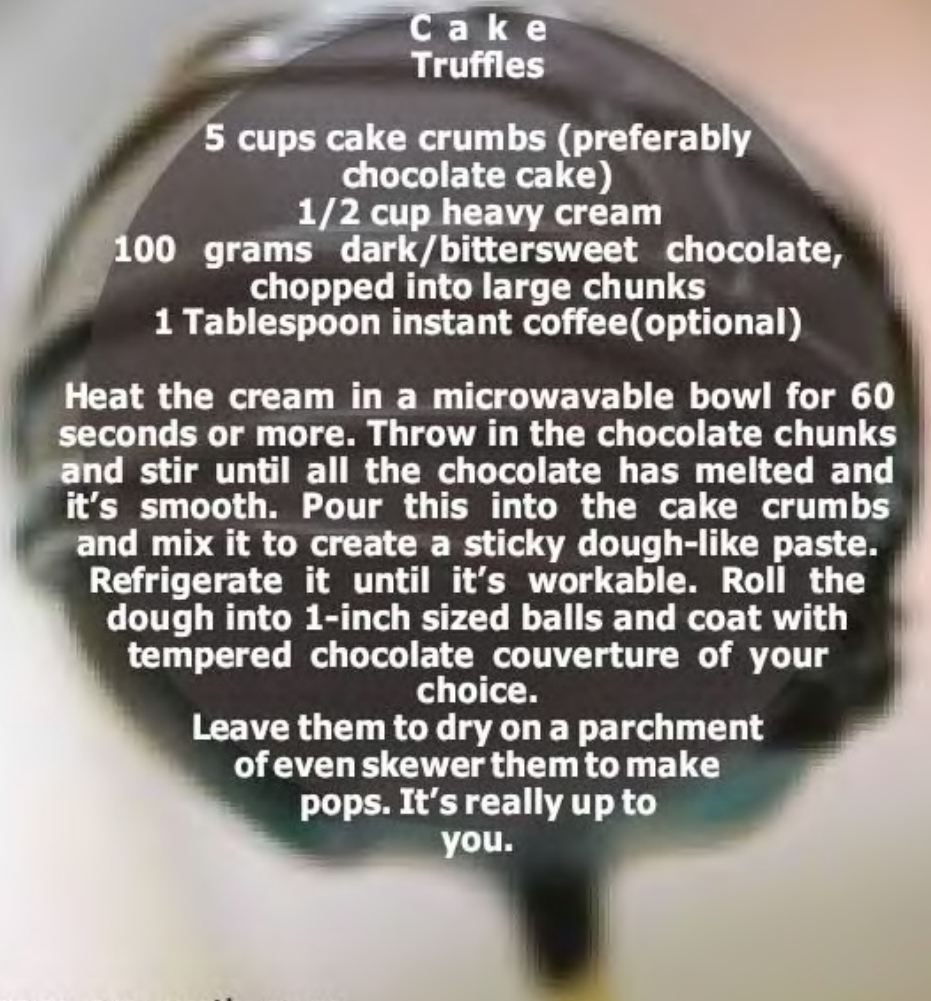
5. Divide the mixture into 2 equal portions. Keep one portion plain. Add cocoa powder into another and mix well.
6. Scoop 3 heaped tablespoons of plain batter. Then scoop 3 tablespoons of cocoa batter and pour it in the center on top of the plain batter. IMPORTANT! Do not stop and wait until the previous batter spreads - KEEP GOING! Do not spread the batter or tilt the pan to distribute the mixture. It will spread by itself and fill the pan gradually. Continue alternating the batters until you finish them.
7. Bake in the oven for about 40 minutes. Do not open the oven door at least the first 20 minutes or the cake will shrink and will not rise. To check if the cake is ready, insert a toothpick into the center. It should come out clean when ready. Remove from the oven. Immediately run a small thin knife around the inside of the pan to loosen the cake, then invert the cake onto a cooking rack. Turn the cake back over and let cool. You can sprinkle the top of the cake with some powdered (confectioner's) sugar or leave it plain.

Farida is originally from Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, "a beautiful country with friendly people, rich culture, and delicious cuisine." She shares recipes of dishes that are commonly prepared in Azerbaijan at Farida's Azerbaijani Cookbook, http://AZcookbook.com

Waste Not...

Cake Truffles

Cake Truffles Pops



C a k e
Truffles

5 cups cake crumbs (preferably chocolate cake)
1/2 cup heavy cream
100 grams dark/bittersweet chocolate, chopped into large chunks
1 Tablespoon instant coffee(optional)

Heat the cream in a microwavable bowl for 60 seconds or more. Throw in the chocolate chunks and stir until all the chocolate has melted and it's smooth. Pour this into the cake crumbs and mix it to create a sticky dough-like paste. Refrigerate it until it's workable. Roll the dough into 1-inch sized balls and coat with tempered chocolate couverture of your choice.
Leave them to dry on a parchment of even skewer them to make pops. It's really up to you.

Cake scraps are worth more than their reputation as 'shavings'. Here's a little recipe I thought I'd share with cake decorators out there. I'm sure some of you regulars have already been making these for some time now. Su-Yin blogs from Malaysia about her cooking experiences, and food adventures. Visit her at http://cookingismypassion.blogspot.com

Recipe and Photographs by Su-Yin

SugarVeil...The tasteful decorations you can eat!

Michele Hester, a native of Kansas City, is the inventor of SugarVeil® Confectionary Icing. Mix. Hester wanted to make an icing that could make decorations "off the cake" and that would handle like fabric and be flexible enough to drape onto the cake for placement.

It took her nearly two years and countless hours researching to invent SugarVeil, a new form of icing that lets you decorate cakes, chocolates, and desserts easily and without professional training.

SugarVeil® is a delicate tasting, glossy white icing that can be finely piped, combed into lines, stenciled, or spread into a very thin layer onto parchment paper or silicone mat to easily make unique decorations that, when set, can be peeled from the paper and applied to a dessert like a decal, ruffled like fabric, tied into knots, cut with decorative-edged scissors and wrapped around the sides of a cake, or used to decorate cookies or a dessert plate.

This innovative not-too-sweet icing transforms home bakers and trained chefs alike into master cake decorators in minutes, without any complicated techniques or tools.

The electric SugarVeil ® Icing Dispenser fits in the hand like a pen to effortlessly draw lines finer than the cumbersome piping bag. You control it by placing a finger over a hole on the pen, like a musical instrument, and then just start drawing.

You can trace intricate bridal lace, monograms, company logos, or other detailed patterns and transform them easily into beautiful, edible decorations. Or just draw your own designs and patterns. These pieces may be made in advance, and are flexible to later peel and drape onto/ around a cake or personalized a plated dessert. For more information visit SugarVeil® at www.sugarveil.com

"Life is like a cake. It's up to you to decorate it." — Michele Hester

"Chartreuse Chanteuse" Multiple Techniques

By Michele Huster
Photographs by Mike Chaloupka

SugarVeil® "Chartreuse Chanteuse" demonstrates the versatility of SugarVeil®. Use a variety of techniques with prepared SugarVeil® Confectionery Icing and make delectable decoration details that flexibly drape onto a cake or plated dessert. You will learn how to:

- Use a stencil for detailed patterns
- Smooth to create solid SugarVeil "fabric"
- Bend into 3-D bows
- Cast SugarVeil filigree with silicone molds
- Comb into lines that may be tied into knots
- Cut decorative edges with specialty scissors
- Twist to form decorative ribbons and trim

A 1 lb. pouch of SugarVeil® yields 21 sq. ft. of SugarVeil "fabric" which you can:

- Make 55 beautiful 6" bows with tails or
- Create 136 punched polka dot cakes or
- Wrap 245 cakes with SugarVeil veils

1. Assemble Cake. Cut the brim from the straw hat and "paint" the hat brim with SugarVeil.

2. White "Rick-Rack" Trim. Spread white SugarVeil very thinly onto the silicone mat.

3. When set, peel from surface and cut with decorative scissors. Wrap around cake.

4. Floating Sphere Trim. Using Heavy Lines edge of the Confectionery Comb, comb a swath of white lines 10" long. Allow to set.

5. Pipe a series of large teal dots connecting two white lines. Use exact same dot positioning until you have 2 pieces 20" in length. Allow to set.

6. Moisten back of dots as you go to attach two strips of dots/lines back to back to form floating spheres.

7. Twist the floating sphere trim and attach to cake.

8. Twisted Ribbon Trim. Pipe teal SugarVeil between white SugarVeil lines and allow to set.

9. Twist ribbon and attach to cake.

10. Stenciled Shapes. Place stencil on mat & spread SugarVeil across stencil scraping tightly; spread second layer of SugarVeil thickly over stencil.

11. Peel stencil by rolling stencil very slowly back, allowing SugarVeil to "pull back into itself" and form a dimensional motif. Allow to set.

12. Attach vines and scrolls to cake.

13. Pick and Place Tool. Use the SugarVeil Icing Dispenser suction tool (or your fingers) to pick up tiny leaves, and attach to cake.

14. 3D Effects. Place scrolls on cake, a bit of moisture on ends only of scrolls.

15. Bending and manipulating to be intertwined and raised from cake surface.

16. SugarVeil Bow. Smooth a large solid chartreuse area. Allow to set. Cut two solid pieces 4" wide and 12" long, and one bow center 2" x 3".

17. Stencil a white decorative border. Allow to set.

18. Fold a hem at each lengthwise edge, moisten the edge of the SugarVeil, and encapsulate the a folded wafer paper strip in the hem.

19. Gather each crosswise end to the short wafer paper strips.

20. Bring both gathered edges to center of bow, moisten back of one gathered edge and slightly overlap the other.

21. Twist other long strip in half for tails of bow.

22. Gather center piece of bow at short end and attach to short pieces of wafer paper. Assembling bow tails behind bow and angle-trim edges. Fashion bow into 3D shape and stuff with rolled parchment until dry.

23. Using one white and one chartreuse line of SugarVeil, wrap lines around skewer to cover. Place skewer in center of cupcake and mount bow atop skewer.

24. Use the Icing Dispenser fitted with a pink tip (or a parchment cone) to add tiny dots on the edge of the bow once it is in place.

25. Cast SugarVeil Filigree Piece. Spread chartreuse SugarVeil into silicone mold. Scrape away excess. Place into 170 degree oven for one hour; turn off and leave in oven 30 minutes more to set.

26. Remove from oven and tightly flex mold away from SugarVeil piece to remove piece.

27. Knot a small length of white SugarVeil line at both ends. Thread thru filigree piece.

28. Attach filigree piece to cake by tying strand onto a scroll. Voila! To purchase SugarVeil® visit at www.sugarveil.com

Cakes
by

Vera
Figueredo

There are people that make cakes, there are people that decorate cakes and there is Vera Figueredo, she creates. Her creativity will suprehend and suprise. Vera, a brazilian cake decorator, has built a profitable business out of passion. Not long ago when she decided to make cakes, no one imagined, perhaps not even her, that she found what every one looks for: to do what one loves. She found the recipe that is not in any cookbook, that is to do with heart and soul. Visit her "atelier", www.verafigueredo.com.br, and you'll agree.

Up Close and Personal Vera Figueredo...

1. What's the name of your business?

The name of my business is Vera Figueredo Atelier de Bolos.

2. When did you start decorating cakes?

I started decorating cakes seven years ago (2001) when I was looking for a beautiful cake for my daugther 's Sweet Sixteen. Since I did not have enough money to buy, I decided to learn by myself how to decorate different cakes.

3. With whom did you learn how to bake?

I learned to decorate cakes by myself since I did not have enough money to take classes. I would search for information in the Brazilian magazine. I would take the technique and apply to where I would find interesting. The internet has been a great help for me to get in touch with cake decorators from the United States and UK, who gave me the freedom to use my imagination and will to evolve more and more.

After 4 years, in 2005, already working professionally, I took my first cake decorating class to learn Flavia Millas' techniques, she is a very talented cake decorator and one of the pioneers to use fondant in Brazil.

In September of 2006, I took a more advanced professional class to improve my techniques with Marcela Sanchez, a very well known cake decorator especially in Europe.

In October of the same year, I participated in the 6° Show Internacional de Decoração Artistica de Bolos organized by Collete Peters , Jill Maytham and Ana Maria Salinas.

In 2007, I participated in the 1° Concurso e Congresso Internacional de Confeitaria MS Trophy's 2007 in Brazil with the appearance of Alan Dun, Tombi Peck,Margareth Ford, Elaine Mac Gregor, Analia Zecca, and Marcela Sanchez.

4. What is the most requested cake flavor?

The most requested cake flavor is chocolate. (Chocolate cake filled with semisweet chocolate ganache.) The walnut cake comes in second place especially for more formal parties such as weddings. It is a wanult cake filled with a custard and apricot.

5. Have you ever had to refuse a request?

I had a customer who asked me to make a cake with a 30cm height and that it had a 80 degree angle. I refused because I didn't think it would look good aesthetically. I have taken cakes to other cities and states. I always try to make the impossible possible.

6. What inspire you?

Anything can inspire me, for example, the step-by-step cake was inspired by the cake drawings from a comic book. Clients inspire me a lot. But what really inspire me is to overcome and try to give the best of myself, and make a cake that will make me happy when I look at it.

7. Do you have a cake that only you make?

I do not know why there are people that would say that they are the only one who makes a particular cake, I find it a little difficult. But I have made cakes that for certain have one of a kind decorations and shapes.

8. What time of the year you are the busiest?
I have many orders for birthday cakes in April and in October many weddings orders.

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1. Qual e o nome da sua compania?
Minha companhia chama Vera Figueredo Atelier de Bolos.

2. Quando comecou a fazer bolos?
Comecei a fazer bolos a 7 anos atras (2001) pois estava procurando um bolo bonito para minha filha que iria fazer 15 anos.Como não tinha dinheiro para compra-lo resolvi aprender para eu mesma fazer um bolo diferente.

3. Com quem aprendeu a fazer bolos?
Eu aprendi a fazer bolos sozinha, sou auto ditada pois não tinha dinheiro para pagar cursos. Procurava informações em revista Brasileiras eu pegava a tecnica e aplicava em mode-los q achava interessante.A internet me ajudou muito pois entrei em contato com decoradoras americanas e inglesas que deram asas a minha imaginação e a vontade de evoluir mais e mais .

Depois de 4 anos em 2005 já trabalhando profissionalmente fiz meu primeiro curso para aprender a tecnica empregada por Flávia Millás, uma decoradora de mão cheia e uma das pioneiras no uso de pasta americana no Brasil.

Em setembro de 2006 fiz o curso avançado profissional com Marcela Sanchez decoradora reconhecida principalmente na Europa, tb para desenvolver minha tecnica. Em outubro do mesmo ano participei do 6° Show Internacional de Decoração Artistica de Bolos ministrado pelas mestras Collete Perters americana confeiteira da Casa Branca na epoca de Bill Clinton, Jill Maytham sul africana e dona da marca de produtos para decoração de bolo Jem Cutters e Ana Maria Salinas Brasileira com mais de 30 anos de experincia na arte de decorar bolos.

Em 2007 participei do 1° Concurso e Congresso Internacional de Confeitaria MS Trophy's 2007 no Brasil com a presença de Alan Dun, Tombi Peck,Margareth Ford, Elaine Mac Gregor, Analia Zecca e Marcela Sanchez.

4. Qual e o sabor de bolo mais pedido?
Com certeza o sabor de bolo mais pedido é o de chocolate (bolo chifon de chocolate com recheio de ganache de chocolate ao leite e meio amargo) O bolo de nozes vem segundo lugar principalmente para festas mais formais como casamentos.Bolo de nozes com recheio de ovos moles e damascos.

5. Ja teve algum pedido que voce recusou?
Já, uma cliente me pediu um bolo com apenas 30 cm de altura e que tivesse 80 degraus.Recusei o pedido pois achei que a estética não ficaria boa. Mas já levei bolos para outras cidades e estados e sempre procuro fazer do impossivel o possivel.

6. O que te inspira?
Qualquer coisa pode me inspirar,o bolo do passo a passo por exemplo foi inspirado em bolos desenhados em gibis, o cliente me inspira muito. Mas o que me inspira mesmo é a superação, é tentar dar o melhor de mim e fazer um bolo que me faça feliz ao olhar.

7. Voce tem um bolo que so voce faz?
Não sei pq no mundo inteiro tem gente fazendo bolos e dizer que algum tipo de bolo só eu tenha feito acho um pouco dificil.Mas tenho bolos que com certeza tem decorações unicas e formato tb.

8. Qual e a epoca do ano que tem mais pedidos?
Em abril tenho muitos bolos de aniversário e em outubro muitos de casamento.
Informacao de contato e o website:
website: www.verafigueredo.com.br
flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/verafigueredo
e-mail: vera@verafigueredo.com.br

Step-by-Step guide to make someone's wish come true...

Recipe and Photographs by Vera Figueredo

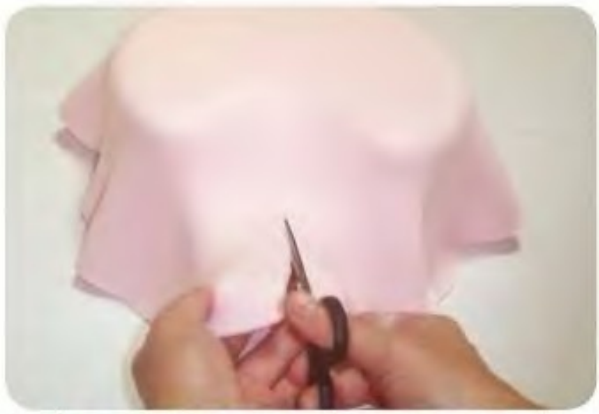
(Black = English; Green = Portuguese)

Material: Saco de confeitar, copo, pinceis, cortador retangular, de folha e de tiras onduladas, tesoura, bico redondo, palito, bisturi.

Tools: Pastry bag, wheel cutter, glass, brushes, rectangular cutter, leaf cutter, wavy roller cutter, scissor, round pastry tips, wooden stick, scalpel.

Cores da pasta americana: rosa clara, branca, verde claro, marron, vermelho, creme, amarelo.

Fondant colors: Light pink, white, light green, brown, red, cream, yellow.



1. Abra o fondant rosa coloque em cima do bolo já sem a fatia e faça um corte no fondant em direção ao centro da fatia.
Roll the pink fondant and place on top of the cake with a slice already cut and cut the fondant towards the center.

2. Com as 2 pontas restantes do corte cubra as laterais do espaço da fatia puxando o fondant para dentro.
With the two ends cut cover the sides by pulling the fondant in.

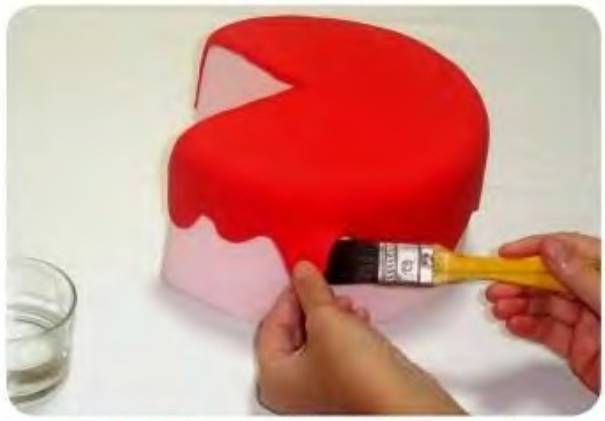
3. Corte os excessos.
Cut the excess fondant with a scalpel.

4. Umedeça o topo do bolo com água.
Moisten the top of the cake with water.

5. Coloque o fondant vermelho sobre o bolo já coberto e tire o excesso. É importante que caia pelo menos uns 6 centímetros na lateral.
Place red fondant over the cake and cut out the excess. It's important that the red fondant falls about 6 cm on the sides.

6. Alise o fondant vermelho para que fique assentado na lateral.
Smooth the red fondant so that it sticks to the sides of the cake.

7. Com bisturi corte ondas disformes tendo cuidado para não cortar o fondant rosa.
With a scalpel cut waves being careful not to cut through the pink fondant.



8. Cole as ondas com pincel úmido de água.
Glue the waves with a brush moisten with water.

9. Repetir os passos 5, 6,7 e 8 usando fondant branco e cortando as ondas acima das ondas vermelhas.
Repeat steps 5, 6, 7, and 8 using the white fondant and cut the waves above the red waves.

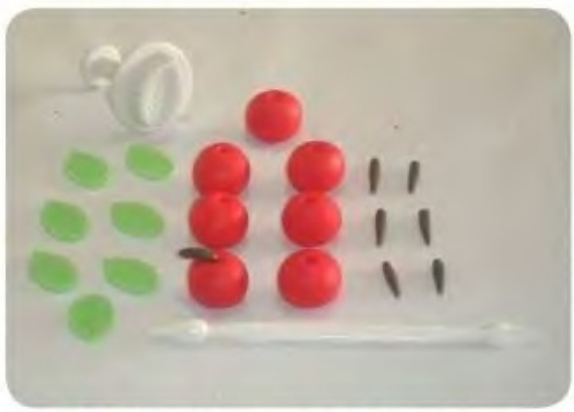
10. Abra fondant marrom com espessura fina e faça um rolinho.
Thinly roll out the brown fondant and roll the fondant.

11. Umedeça as laterais do espaço da fatia.
Moisten the inside of the sliced cake.

12. Coloque o fondant marrom desenrolando-o
Place the brown fondant by unrolling.

13. Corte as rebarbas.
Cut the excess brown fondant with a scissor.

15. Cole com água as tiras espaçadamente.
Glue the strips of cream fondant with water.



17. Faça 7 bolinhas de fondant vermelho e usando esteca de ponta marque um furinho no centro em cada uma delas. Faça 7 folhas verdes e 7 cabinhos marrom.
Make 7 little balls with the red fondant and using the fondant stick tool make a hole in the center. Make 7 leaves and 7 brown stalk.

14. Abra o fondant creme c/ espessura fina e corte tiras com cortador de tiras onduladas ou faça com bisturi.
Thinly roll out the cream fondant and cut strips of wavy fondant or cut with a scalpel.

16. Faça um cordão com fondant vermelho e contorne as ondas vermelhas, repita o processo com o branco.
Make a red rope with the red fondant and place around the red wave, and repeat with the white fondant.

18. Coloque-as espaçadamente em volta do bolo.
Place the cherries on top the cake.

19. Com fondant rosa faça um cordão, umedeça-o e enrole em volta de um palito.
Make a thin rope with the pink fondant, moisten the toothpick and roll around the wooden stick.

20. Espete no centro do bolo.
Insert the candle in the center of the cake.

21. Faça uma gota amarela.
Make a teardrop shape with the yellow fondant.

22. Coloque a gota e pinte com corante comestível.
Place the teardrop on top of the candle and paint the bottom of the teardrop with a red food color.

Final touches...

23. Abra pasta rosa e corte um retângulo com uma bolinha vazada em uma das pontas.
Roll the pink fondant and cut a rectangle. Using the tip of a small round pastry tip cut out one of the corner end.

24. Coloque o cartãozinho escrito com glacê e amarre-o a vela. Com o mesmo glacê faça o acabamento em volta do corte da fatia.
Place the little tag written with icing and tie around the candle. With the same icing pipe little dots around the sliced cake.

For more information visit www.verafigueredo.com.br

CHOCOLATE CHIFFON CAKE

7 large egg yolks
7 large egg whites
1 3/4 cup of granulated sugar
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup boiling water
1/2 cup cocoa powder
1 teaspoon salt
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
Pure vanilla extract, to taste

1. Pre-heat oven to 150°C. Spread the side of two 8-inch round cake pan with butter/margarine and flour.

2. Sift all the dry ingredients.

3. Beat the sugar, egg yolks, and the oil until fluffly and light yellow.

4. Add the boiling water alternating with the dry ingredients. Start with the dry and finish with the dry. Add the pure vanilla extract.

5. Beat the egg whites until soft peak and fold the whites into the batter.

6. Pour the batter in the pan and bake for around 40 minutes or until when a cake tester inserted comes out clean.

CHOCOLATE GANACHE
(Filling)
500g milk chocolate
250g semisweet chocolate
450g heavy cream

1. Finely chopped the chocolate and place in the microwave for about 3 minutes or until the chocolate is melted and stir slowly until well combined.

2. Add the heavy cream and stir until it is creamy.

3. Place in the refrigerator thicken.

4. It is best to make the ganache one day before using. If you have difficulty to spread the ganache on the cake heat the ganache a little in the microwave until it is spreadable.

BOLO CHIFON DE CHOCOLATE

7 ovos
1 ¾ de xícara de açúcar
½ xícara de óleo
¾ de xícara de água fervente
½ xícara de chocolate em pó
1 colher de chá de sal
3 colher de chá de fermento em pó
1 ¾ de xícara de farinha de trigo
Baunilha a gosto

MODO DE FAZER

1. Pré aqueça o forno a 150°C. Unte as 2 formas de 20 cm de diâmetro com manteiga/ margarina e farinha de trigo

2. Peneire os ingrediente secos:chocolate, farinha, sal, e fermento.

3. Bata o açúcar , as gemas e o óleo até esbranquiçar.

4. Vá juntando a água fervente alternado com os ingredientes peneirados. Junte a baunilha.

5. Bata as claras em neve e incorpore a massa delicadamente.

6. Coloque a massa na forma e asse em forno fraco (150° C) por cerca de 40 minutos.

GANACHE DE CHOCOLATE (Recheio)
500g de chocolate ao leite
250g de chocolate meio amargo
450g de creme de leite

1. Pique o chocolate e leve ao microondas por mais ou menos 3 minutos ou até que o chocolate derreta então mexa delicadamente para misturar bem.

2. Junte o creme de leite e mexa até que fique liso.

3. Coloque na geladeira para adquirir uma consistência pastosa.

4. O ideal é que seja feito 1 dia antes de confeitar o bolo.Se por acaso sentir dificuldade em espalhar o ganache pelo bolo coloque-o um pouquinho no micro so para chegar no ponto.

Knitting Basket Cake

Recipe and Photographs by Louise W. Dueholm

This cake will be loved by anyone who loves to knit. A small basket filled with yarn and a pair of knitting needles. All edible except the pair of knitting needles.

What you need:

1x oval cake 8"/ 3" high and 1x round cake 6"/2"high. Use a cake that is nice and firm. (If you don't have an oval cake tin then use a 8" round cake tin instead), 10" square cake board, serrated knife, small knife, palette, basket weave embosser from Patchwork Cutters, rolling pin, sugarcraft gun with a medium round

disc, 2 brushes, vegetable shortening, 2 BBQ sticks, silver luster dust, clear alcohol, parchment paper, cornstarch, brown gel food color, 600 grams of light brown rolled fondant, 3x150 grams of rolled fondant in your choice of colors and a small amount of white rolled fondant, ¼ cup of sugar syrup a brush, and chocolate ganache.

1

Chocolate ganache: 150 grams of double cream and 150 grams of good quality dark chocolate. Put the chocolate in a bowl. Bring the cream to the boil and pour the cream over the chocolate. Let the hot cream melt the chocolate and stir it smooth. Set aside to cool down.

1. First start to make the 2 knitting needles: Roll to small pea size balls of white rolled fondant and glue them on the top of the BBQ sticks. Paint them with silver luster dust mixed drops of clear alcohol. Set aside to dry. (Photo 1)

2. Trim off the top of both cakes. Place the small 6" cake in a bowl and break it down with a fork. Add ½ cup of chocolate ganache and mix it well. With your hands form three palm sized "cake balls" place them on parchment paper and place them in the refrigerator to settle.

3. To make the basket, "glue" the cake to the cake board with a small dab of chocolate ganache and crumb coat the whole cake with the chocolate ganache.

4. Knead the light brown rolled fondant on the table lightly dusted with corn starch. Take the rolling pin and roll out the fondant thinly (3mm) use the oval cake tin and cut a piece of fondant. Place the oval fondant piece on top of the cake. Trim off any excess fondant with a small knife.

5. Knead and roll out the light brown

fondant again. Roll it out long enough to go around the cake. Take the basket weave embosser and dust it with cornstarch. Emboss the fondant in one row and cut it with the knife. **(Photo 2)** Roll it up and roll it all around the cake and trim off any excess with the knife. **(Photo 3, 4)**

6. Knead the rest of the fondant again and roll into a long sausages. Lay it double and twist it and cut the ends clean. **(Photo 5)** Glue it on top of the basket with water using a brush. **(Photo 6)**

7. On a plate mix drops of brown gel color with clear alcohol and paint the whole basket brown. Set aside to dry. **(Photo 7)**

8. To make the yarn balls, roll out the fondant thinly. Brush a thin layer of sugar syrup on the cake ball and cover the cake ball with fondant and trim off any excess fondant.

9. To make the strings of yarn simply knead the fondant with vegetable shortening to make it very soft and pliable. Use the sugar craft gun with a medium round disc and make the strings. **(Photo 8)**

10. Cut out two pieces like shown on the photo and glue them with water on both ends of the "cake ball". **(Photo 9)**

11. Make more strings and place them across of the "cake ball" again use water as glue. Trim off any excess fondant. **(Photo 10)**

12. Repeat with the rest of the "cake balls." Place the three "yarn" balls in the basket. Make more strings and place them randomly in the basket. Finish off with placing the knitting needles in the cake. **(Photo 11)**

Louise lives in Copenhagen, Denmark, with her husband and their two kids. The first time she made a cake was for her own wedding, a three tiered cake. Since then she has been decorating cakes. Let her take you to a journey of cake decorating by visiting her at Cake Journal, www.cakejournal.com

CARAMEL POPCORN CUPCAKES

by Kaye & Liv Hansen
Photographs by Ben Fink

CARAMEL POPCORN CUPCAKES

Little Cakes from the Whimsical Bakehouse, by Kaye and Liv Hansen, ©Clarkson Potter, 2008.

Are you having a sleepover birthday party? An Oscar bash? Or just a movie marathon? Why not serve these little popcorn cupcakes.

Wanting to imitate an old-fashioned popcorn box, I searched for red and white striped cupcake papers to no avail. So I decided to make a striped chocolate shell to hold the cupcake instead. I piped buttercream "popcorn" definetely more filling than the real thing, but very fun. An extra sweet suprise awaits you at the bottom of the shell (if you get that far): dulce de leche.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Cake
14 caramel cupcakes

Icing
Kaye's Buttercream or House Buttercream

Filling
Dulce de Leche

Decoration
3 1/2 cups white wafer chocolate to make 14 chocolate boxes.

Colors
Yellow liquid gel color and red candy color

Tip
#8 or #10 round

Miscellaneous
Three 6-mold muffin pans, pastry bag, coupler, pastry cones, 6 to 12 silicone cupcake liners

1. Bake the cakes and let them cool completely. Freeze for 1 hour to overnight. Prepare the filling and icing.

2. Rest the silicone cupcake liners in a cupcake pan so that they are slightly flared at top and do not touch the bottom.

3. Melt the white wafer chocolate. Pour one third of the chocolate into a bowl and tint it red. Pour the white and red chocolate into separate pastry cones and cut medium holes in the tip of each. Pipe alternating red and white stripes up the inside of each liner, using the ridges of the liner as guide. Do not pipe any chocolate in the bottom of the liner until the chocolate has set on the sides; it may get filled as the chocolate settles. Let the chocolate set for a few minutes. Pipe an additional line of white chocolate around the top inner edge to give support, and fill in any areas where the cupcake liner is still visible. Set aside to harden (approx. 1 hour).

4. Carefully peel the silicone liner off the popcorn bucket.

5. Remove the cupcakes from the freezer.

6. Place 1 1/2 tablespoons of dulce the leche in the bottom of each bucket. Place one cupcake, with the paper liner removed, into each bucket, trimming the bottom of the cupcake at an angle if necessasry.

7. Prepare the tinted and flavored buttercream: approx. 2 tablespoons soft buttery yellow and 2 tablespoons dulce de leche buttercream.

8. Place a coupler inside a pastry bag. With a metal spatula, spread a very small amount of the dulce de leche buttercream up one side of a pastry bag. Spread a very small amount of yellow adjancent to the dulce de leche. Fill the rest of the bag with the untinted buttercream. With a #8 or #10 round tip, pipe popcorn all over the top of the cupcake squeezing and holding in place until a ball forms. Tail off. Then squeeze with fluctuating pressure as you move the tip up and down along half to three quarters of the ball circumference.

9. For fullest flavor, serve the cakes at room temperature.

Caramel Cake
Yield: 16 cupcakes

On a piece of was paper, sift together:

2 1/2 cups cake flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt

In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat at high speed unitl ight and fluffy:

6 ounces (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter
1 1/4 cups light brown sugar, packed

Add slowly and beat on ,medium speed until fluffy:

3 extra-large eggs
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

At low speed, add the dry ingredients to the butter and egg mixture alternately with: 6 ounces (3/4 cup) milk

Fold in:

3 ounces (3/4 cup) butterscotch chips or mini chocolate chips

Fill each mold or liner three-quarters full. bake for 18 to 20 minutes, or unitl golden, or 30 minutes for the 4-inch round cakes. The tops should spring back when lightly pressed. Cool on a wire rack for 5 to 10 minutes before removing the cupcakes from their pans or before turning the cakes out of their pans.

Kaye's Buttercream
Yield: 4 cups

It can be store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days and in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. To use the chilled buttercream, bring it to room temperature and beat at medium speed in the bowl of an electric mixer until smooth and creamy.

In a small saucepan, bring to a boil:

1/4 cup water
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar

Use a clean pastry brush and cold water to wash down any sugar crystals that form on the sides of the pan as the water heats. When the sugar comes to a boil, set a timer for 7 minutes, and let boil.

After 5 minutes, in the bowl of an electric mixer, begin to whip at high speed:

1/2 cup egg whites (about 6 large egg whites)

Whip until stiff, They should be done when the timer goes off.

With the mixer on high speed, slowly beat the sugar syrup into the egg whites, pouring the syrup to the side of the bowl to avoid the whip.

Continue to beat until the bowl is cool to the touch, about 10 minutes. Slowly add:

3/4 pound (3 sticks) unsalted butter at room temperature, cut into 1-inch pieces

When the buttercream begins to jump out of the bowl, reduce the speed to low.

Mix in at low speed:

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Beat until light and fluffy. At some points the mixture might look curdled. Just keep beating; it will become smooth again.

Dulce de Leche Buttercream: In a bowl, for every 1 cup of Kaye's Buttercream, mix in 1/4 cup of Dulce de Leche. Stir or whip until thoroughly combined and no lumps of dulce remain.

Dulce de Leche

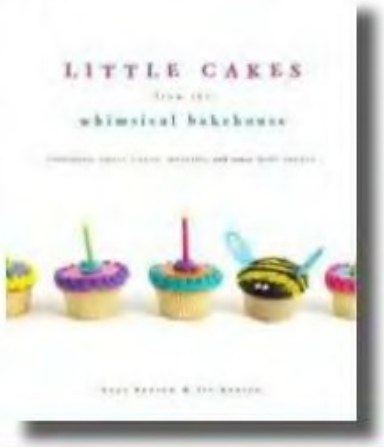
Stovetop directions:
Pour one 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk into the top of a double boiler. Over low heat, simmer for 1 to 1 1/2 hours or unitl thick and caramel-colored, stirring occasionally.

Oven directions:
Pour one 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk into a 9-inch pie plate. Cover the plate with aluminum foil. Place the pie plate in a larger shallow pan. Fill the larger pan with hot water. Bake at 425 degrees F for 1 hour or unitl thick and caramel colored. With a whisk or in the bowl of an electric mixer, beat until smooth.

The mother-daughter team at the Riviera Bakehouse in Westchester, New York, have done it again! In their latest book, **Little Cakes from the Whimsical Bakehouse: Cupcakes, Small Cakes, Muffins, and Other Mini Treats**, an abundance of fabulous new recipes for little decorated cakes, cheesecakes, cupcakes, and more–all in fresh flavor combinations, like caramel cake with dulce de leche buttercream or spicy chocolate cake with cinnamon-chocolate whipped cream. They also provides tips on glazing, icing, and making chocolate decorations and offers details on the equipment you need to get started (including a cake pan chart, so that you can use those mini rose pans, heart pans, and other fun shapes to bake unique creations).

Kaye and Liv will take you step-by-step through the process of creating cakes, piped and appliquéd with bumblebees (white chocolate wings and nonpareil stripes make them irresistible!), blooming roses (or, if you prefer, delicate hydrangeas with lifelike shaded petals), and wild meringues (dressed with tiger stripes, zebra stripes, or leopard spots). The recipes are categorized into three levels: one star for easy, two for intermediate, and three for challenging. So whether you want to start with a charming, super-easy star-shaped mini strawberry shortcake or strive for A Day at the Beach pail-shaped cake, complete with cookie-crumb sand, chocolate shovel, and edible seashells, you'll find a cool confection that fits your skills.

These little cakes are as fun to make as they are delicious to eat!



Up Close and Personal with Kaye and Liv Hansen...

Best baking advice you've ever received:

Kaye: Use a scale to measure your ingredients.
Liv: Measure all of your ingredients carefully.

Alternative dream job:

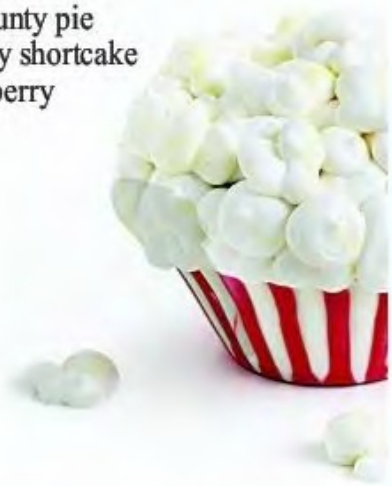
Kaye: Personal trainer
Liv: I would be a painter. Well, I am a painter, but I would be a painter that makes a living from my paintings!

Weirdest thing you've ever eaten:

Kaye: I don't generally go for the weird things. But, I don't like cactus - it is too slimy.
Liv: There isn't much I find weird anymore but there are foods I find unappealing. I've never intentionally eaten any kind of bug or grub and I don't plan on it, but over the years I've inhaled a few gnats. I continue to sample pâté but still can't get myself to like it. I've never liked the white of the egg unless it's cooked – no runniness allowed–EWWW!

Favorite dessert(s):

We have seasonal favorites.
SPRING
Kaye: blueberry crumb cake
Liv: Flan (actually any time of year)
SUMMER
Kaye: summer bounty pie
Liv: real strawberry shortcake (biscuit) and strawberry



rhubarb pie
FALL
Kaye: apple pie
Liv: pumpkin pie, or maybe pecan pie, or maybe sweet potato pecan pie
WINTER
Kaye: Stollen and Christmas cookies
Liv: Gingerbread, ginger snaps,

anything with ginger!

Favorite cookbooks:

Kaye: The Joy of Cooking, and Barefoot Contessa. When I retire I'll use my own books – now I have all of my favorite recipes in home-baking sizes.
Liv: I rarely follow recipes, unless I'm baking, and if I'm baking I usually use one of our own cookbooks. As for cookbooks, I love the clarity of Barefoot Contessa, and everything turns out delicious.

Favorite Chocolate Brand:

Kaye: Callebaut
Liv: I have admitted numerous times that I am not a chocolate lover. As a child I refused to eat it, even picking the chocolate chips out of cookies, but now I am learning to appreciate it. Unfortunately, because of the learning curve I am not one to suggest a brand. I defer to the chocoholics.

Favorite coloring gel brand:

Kaye: Chef Master
Liv: I use Chefmaster colors and I am quite happy with the range of colors I can mix with them. On occasion I have used store-bought McCormick, Wilton, and quite a few brands of paste colors – all were satisfactory. The only thing I don't like is powdered colorant.

Favorite kitchen tool:

Kaye: The scale.
Liv: Spatulas! Rubber, metal, pancake flipping, you name it…

Best baking tip(s) for the home baker:

Kaye: Always read the recipe carefully before starting and have all of your ingredients on hand.
Liv: Have your ingredients, especially butter and eggs, at room temperature (unless otherwise noted).

What do you do when you are not baking?

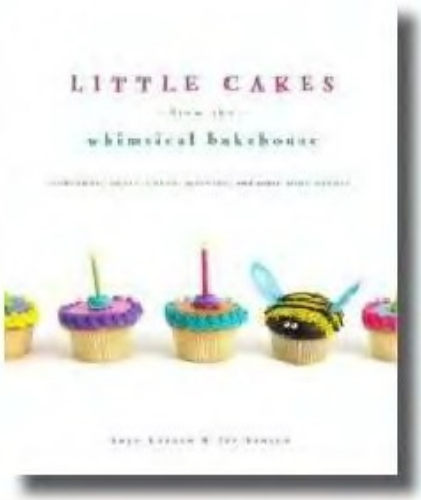
Kaye: I knit, sew, and hang out with my grandson.
Liv: I try to paint and work on my books/website, but most of my time is spent with my son.

Who inspired you?

Kaye: My mom and Jill Miller, my ex business partner, who talked me into opening my first bakery.
Liv: My mom is inspirational. She is the hardest worker I know. I aspire to be as strong as she is – and I don't mean just lifting heavy tiered cakes, but emotionally. She is also "crafty", not in the devious way, but in her various talents like knitting, sewing, and baking - all of which she has mastered.

Any tips or tricks for baking cakes?

Kaye: Make sure your oven is properly calibrated.
Liv: I don't have as many baking tips as my mom, but I have some frosting musts. Work with chilled cakes and cupcakes. This helps reduce the amount of crumbs in your frosting. And make a crumb coat before doing your final layer of frosting- again this reduces the appearance of crumbs.



Get this...

Basketweave Rolling Pin
This plastic rolling pin with handles imprints a deep basketweave pattern on rolled fondant or gumpaste. $37.95. www.amazon.com

Sugarcraft Gun
The patented pump action of the sugarcraft gun has been designed for working with GumPaste, Mexican Paste, Fondant and Marzipan. The unique lever action gives a mechanical assistance when working with these pastes. Suggestions for use of the 16 included Discs. For hair, grass and flower stamens use the mesh discs. For ribbons, lattice and basketweave use slotted discs. For ropes use the clover leaf shaped discs. The square and half round discs can be used for bricks and logs. $47.95 www.amazon.com

Wilton Ribbon Cutter and Embosser Set
This easy-to-use tool is the perfect way to add beautiful textured fondant ribbons, stripes and bows to your cake. Just choose the cutting and embossing wheel designs you want, slide the washer, core, wheels and spacers on the roller handle and roll on top of your fondant. Produces ribbon widths from 1/4 in. to 3 3/4 in. when combining spacers. Complete set includes 36 pieces: 9 cutting wheels-3 straight, 3 wavy, 3 zigzag; 8 embossing wheels-4 striped, 4 beaded; 9 spacers-one 1/3 in., two each 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 and 1 in. wide; roller handle detachable core and assembly hardware. $11.95. www.amazon.com

Try this...

BeaterBlade for KitchenAid Tilt-Head & Bowl-Lift Mixers

Cut your mixing time by up to 50 percent with the New Metro Design BeaterBlade. The BeaterBlade mixes the batter so thoroughly that it eliminates build-up on the blade and bowl. It also saves wear and tear on your mixer's motor by eliminating the need to turn the mixer off and on to scrape the bowl manually.

It's one of the most efficient kitchen tools you'll ever own. Engineered for use with top-brand electric stand mixers, such as KitchenAid, Cuisinart, Viking and DeLonghi stand mixers. The BeaterBlade will work with any KitchenAid tilt-head mixer, no matter its size, age, or power level; and, KitchenAid 5 & 6-Quart Bowl Lift models.

The BeaterBlade is perfect for cakes, cookies, frostings, quick breads, compound butters, meatloaf, pie fillings, mashed potatoes, gum paste and other foods. It washes easily and safely on the top rack of your dishwasher; just place it upside down on the rung, and use a bottle brush to clean the inside of the neck. $24.95, WWW.AMAZON.COM

MAKE BETTER-LOOKING FOOD PHOTOS FROM HOME ON A BUDGET

by Arfi Binsted

First time blogging in 2005, I didn't have any clue what food photography was. I only used a video camera and used the snapshot button to freeze the object to look like a photo. I thought it was pretty good, so in 2006 I started sending my photos to the prestige food photos event Does My Blog Look Good In It?. Of course, my photos did not make it to the top. I always came back to see who the winners were and learned from the winning photos how they had won such titles for suitable lighting, composition, and styling.

From that on, I realized that there are things I have to learn to achieve better photos which will be enjoyed by others: the fresh food (such as, freshly cooked, freshly picked vegetables or those which are steamed are worth to be captured!), the styling that supports the look of the food to appeal to the audience's appetite and taste; and, the techniques to successfully show the readers the clarity and texture of the food. You want to see your photos to have that delicious and lip-smacking look that make people want to lick their screen. And how would you do that? From home, without those fancy studio lights and expensive gears? Can you? Yes, you can!

When I bought a pocket camera, I still continued learning the elements of food photography without really going into it and did not really get what still life was. I just love taking photos of nature, bees and flowers. To me, they appeal more than food. Only the curiosity to produce better food photography leads me to get into it much more later on, by sending more photos to several photo events, I am becoming self-taught and becoming decisive on my own works.

Had I not received a SLR camera as a birthday gift from my husband last year, I would never found out that I could take good food photography. I read the manual attached with the camera and practice a lot with it. I've become aware of what aperture, diaphragm, low light, soft focus, exposure, depth of field and other photography terms are. I learn more about the aesthetics of food photography, the lighting which works for that certain field and consider it as an art form. I also have food photography on my mind when I am looking through dish-wares at stores.

I am not a professional photographer, therefore, I am only going to give you the points I usually use for food photography I am producing from home. Everyone has a different style and these points are only from my point-of-view. I hope you'll be learning something from this article and be making better-looking food photos as well.

Equipments

I am using:
Camera: Canon EOS 400D
Standard Lens: 18-55mm; EF 50mm f/1.4 USM
Reflector: A DIY made from a cake board or a styrofoam lined with tin foil

I find that equipments are important. Either a camera pocket or DSLR, they are both important. Although they have different features and technical functions, it is only you who can make them useful. Of course, lens can give different results.

I love my camera and I do love my new lens as it helps me to get a really sharp image with aperture f/1.4. I usually have it stop at f/2.5, f/2.8. Very sharp, very fast. However, it does not mean that other lenses are not good enough for shooting food. I was using 18-55mm and the aperture was around f/4.0 to f/5.6 and it was still rather good for its size.

Composition

This is one of many important things of how to look at an object which will make a photo good, although sometimes I may have broken the principle. I usually apply the principle of the rule of thirds and move along with it with more experiments from different angles, sets and styles. However, as you can always break the rules, there are more possible ways to achieve good composition.

Try to fill your frame with your setting, see it through your lens, press halfway and look again. If you're sure you're making a good frame, then press away. If you're not sure, re-arrange, re-set your camera setting or get different angles or different properties, then you start again.

Lighting

I am using natural light with the helps of a DIY reflector I made myself from a cake board lined with tin foil. I also use a big styrofoam I found in one of the old boxes where the TV set delivered and covered it with tin foil as well.

You will be very lucky if you have a wide and large window which can provide sufficient light for your food photography. I am using a similar way and when the lights are too strong, I use a white cloth to diffuse the light, to make the light go softer. I am using a muslin cloth (cheese cloth) for diffusing the light. I think if I can find a similar way to make it like the proper studio gadgets, it is unnecessary to buy expensive ones. However, it depends on you and your budget. If you can, go for it!

Point of Interest

Every food has different characteristics and point of interests (POI) which should be shown proudly on a photo. With different settings and different styles, it will give much more appetizing points rather than just try one setting and you're not satisfied with it but decided to go with it. It is just like giving yourself whole, while you're still having time to make it better, then do it. Different settings, different styles, and different angles will give you more views on what you're doing and to sort photos which are looking much more pleasant than the others.

The point of interest is ranged. Whether it is oozy sauce, creamy filling or just a homey cake, there should be a point to lift up. Biscuit crumbs, messy

am going to represent without eliminating the focus on food.

Whatever properties you use, I believe they should not become distraction elements to the food presented. The properties have a function to support the food, to make the food look good with neat presentation, but not to 'hide' the food behind your properties. The good thing is that if the food and the properties work together, you should not worry about one thing or the other. However, at some styling, you probably need to go much bolder and push yourself out of your comfort zone, to get a different style which works with the food. At times, you also need to make experiments with different properties to see which are the best to go with the food and the whole presentation. Yes, it is time-consuming, but this is how to achieve good photos.

When shooting Bombay Lamb Curry, for instance, the theme on my head is Bollywood. I searched the images of Bollywood, the actors and actresses, the Indian cultures and found its sensational vibrant customs and costumes. I go with that idea on my mind. I use the tiffin which was a gift from a friend who just returned from Punjab, India, which are in miniature sizes. After setting the tiffin with other fresh elements of coriander leaves I thought a bright napkin will be the tone I am looking for to give vibrant colour on the photo as well as giving a nice colour balance from the curry.

The vibrant image is also going for the Rice Kheer which also was poured into a tiffin with green line around the edge. I matched it with blanched almonds scattered with pistachio nuts which its green will give a texture and balance to the green line on the tiffin and gives a tone to the creamy colour of blanched almonds. Still with the vibrant image of India going on in my mind, I found this red blouse I've never worn in my wardrobe. The idea goes smoothly because the red blouse gives the similar texture to the red saffron thread.

Six steps to better photography:

1. I shoot a lot! I would be damned if I only take 1-2 photos for one set. I usually take hundreds of photos. The photo of these tapioca pearls is only one of hundreds I took in different days until I was satisfied myself with it. The vessel I used was only a chopstick stand, believe it or not.

2. I set a lot of sets and styles. For hundreds of photos I use the initial set and if I am not satisfied, I will change with other sets with different properties, angles, focus and backgrounds. It is important to see it in different ways, so you can always look for the best, referring to the composition, styling, and POI.

3. I cook, I photograph, and I eat! I usually have a plan what to cook and what to photograph. I take photos of freshly cooked food, unless they are cakes or cheesecakes and other foods which need to be left for overnight

or so. I like to be able to capture the ooze, the creamy texture, the after-cooking colour, and the steam, if I can. As soon as it is cooked, I arrange them on the table and shoot them as quickly as I can before I am loosing anything. You don't want to see your meat going gray or your salad becoming wilted, don't you? So, capture the food as soon as you can while they're still fresh.

4. I use GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program). This is a similar manipulation program with Photoshop. I don't use too much of the manipulation tools on food photos like you need to do on landscape or nature photos or other photo arts. The essential tools that I use are the brightness and contrast and sometimes I am using levels adjustment to balance the bright and contrast elements on a photo. I also use a text tool which is necessary to watermark my works. Editing is necessary but too much manipulation does not work on food photography. Be wise with saturation tool. When it is set on high level too much, it will blur the details of either the food or the whole setting; on the other hand, too low set will fade the natural colour of the food. My suggestion is just use a level at a time to see if it works, then you can continue until it is suitable.

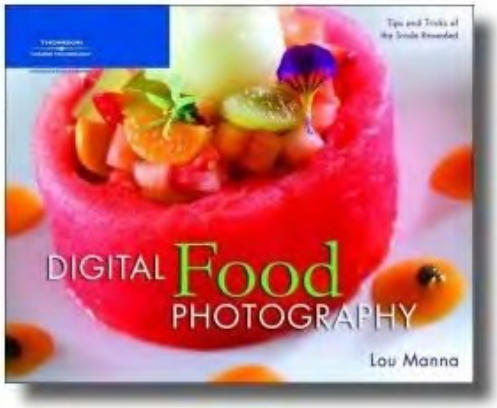
5. I challenge myself! From the first time I send my photos to many photo events, I become self-taught on food photography. I often challenge myself to send my photos to photo events just to discover new styles and techniques from the winning photos. This is not a way to copy-cat but to learn how to apply the method to your on photo. I often come up with my own style because you can't always have the exact factors the particular photographer have at hands with the ones you've got at home. Devices may be different, but at least, you learn from other views. Don't worry if your photos don't make it to the top because the point is to produce better-looking photos and to take it as a way to widening your horizon on food photography to be a better one yourself. Make it as a classroom, furthermore, you're also enlarging your experiences and networking!

6. "Practice makes perfect" is a good motto!

Arfi Binsted, of Homemades: The Joy of Domestic Cooking, is an Indonesian who lives in the countryside of South Auckland, New Zealand. Visit her at http://homemades.blogspot.com where you will not only find the recipe for the Almond Orange Cake shown on the photo above but see many of her great photographs.

Read this...

Digital Food Photography

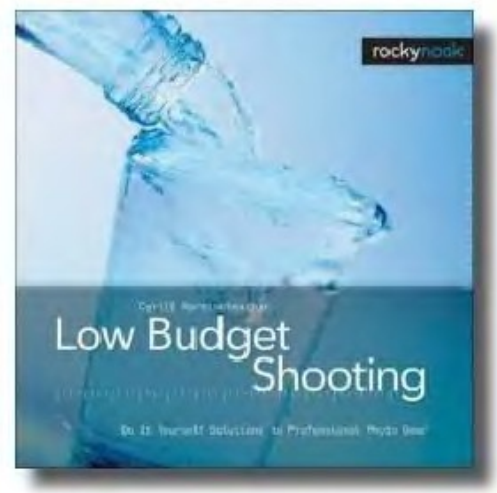


Great food always elicits strong reactions-the smell of freshly baked bread, the taste of a perfectly prepared steak. The job of a food photographer is to elicit that same mouth-watering reaction, but without the benefits of scent or taste. A well-shot photograph can send crowds flocking to a new restaurant or boost the sales of a culinary magazine. Capturing the perfect image requires a trained eye, finesse, and photographic skills. Lou Manna book Digital Food Photography gives you the ingredients to cook up your own recipe for success-with professional lighting techniques, composition, food and prop styling, retouching, and tricks of the trade. You'll learn how digital photography combines teamwork, creativity, and technology, and how to make money creating delectable works of photographic art.

About the Author

Lou Manna is an award-winning Olympus Visionary photographer. He has more than 30 years of experience working with chefs, photographing cookbooks, and shooting food for publications. Manna has been shooting digitally for more than 10 years. Manna has worked on location and in his studio with famous chefs such as Michael Lomonaco, Jacques Pepin, Bobby Flay, Lidia Bastianich, and Emeril Lagasse. amazon.com

Low Budget Shooting



The serious amateur photographer often faces the problem that even after all the dollars spent on camera, lenses, computer gear, and software, the spending never seems to end. More gear is needed for studio photography, tabletop photography, flash photography, and for accessories here and there. And in many cases, the right accessories are not even available. That is where this book comes in. Cyrill Harnischmacher first book Low Budget Shooting is the one-stop source where you will find instructions and a shopping list on how to build an array of useful and inexpensive photographic tools. This book won him the prestigeous Fotobuch-award of the German Booksellers Association in 2005.

Filled with full-color images and easy-to-follow text, this book shows how to build essential lighting and studio equipment; how to make the perfect light-table for shooting small objects; and how to build reflectors, soft-boxes, and light-tents that really work. It also tells where to get some of the little helpers that make a photographer's life so much easier. This clever little book is a creative and valuable resource for most any photographer. amazon.com

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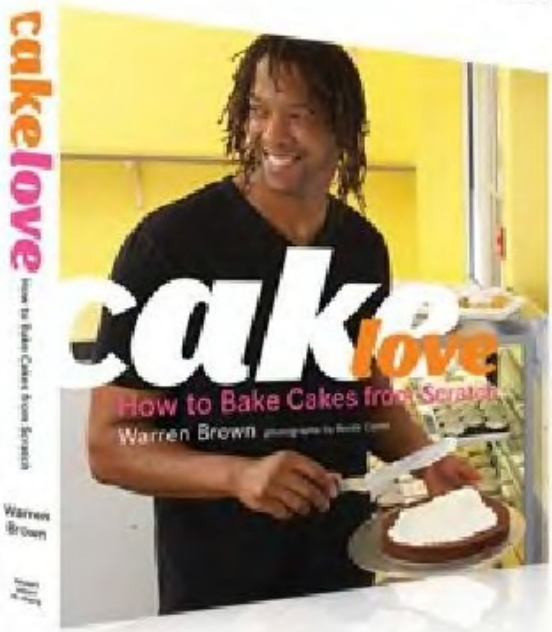

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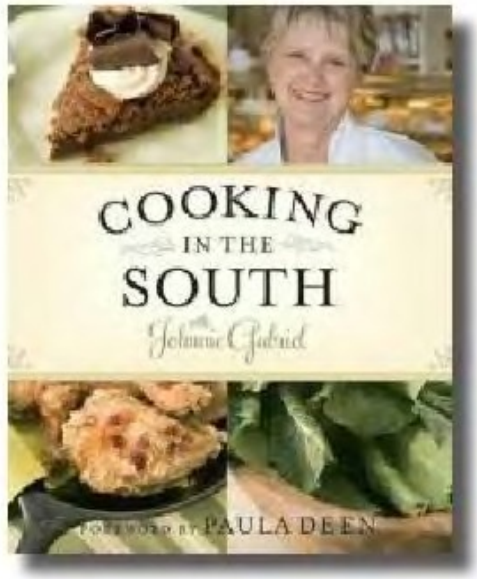

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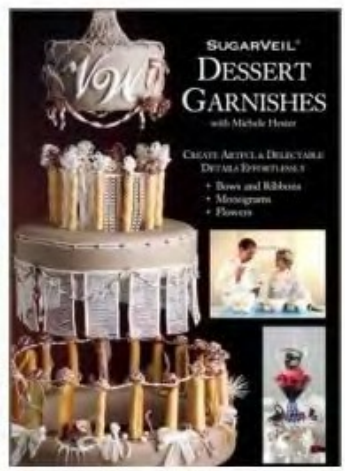

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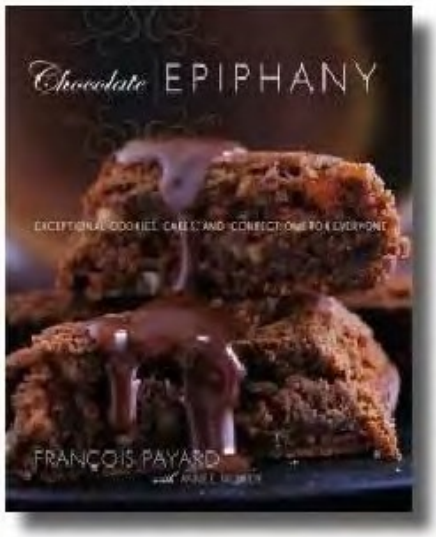

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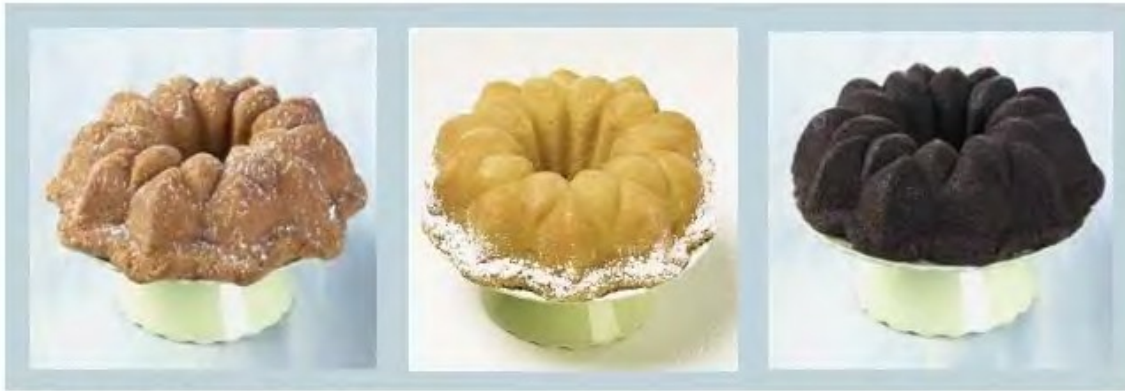

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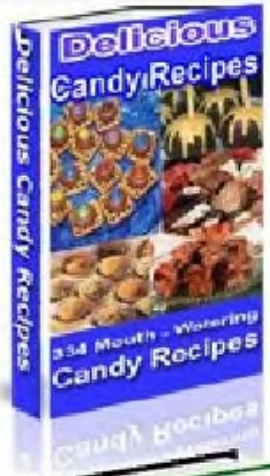
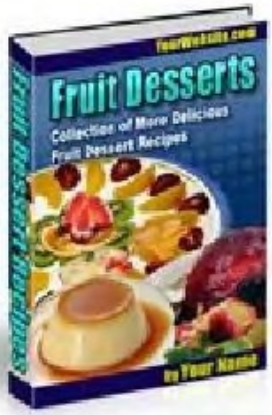
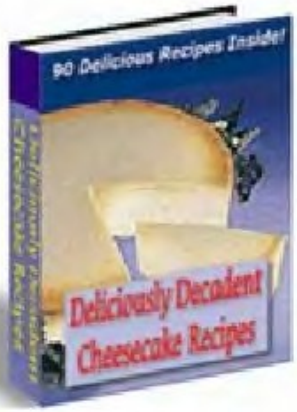
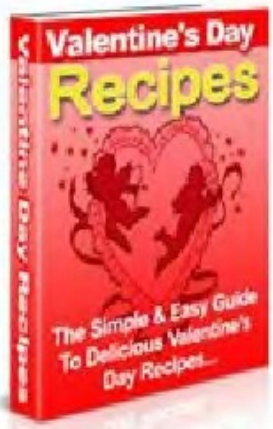
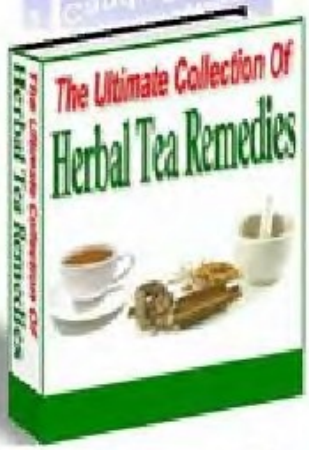
The Ultimate Recipe Book Collection











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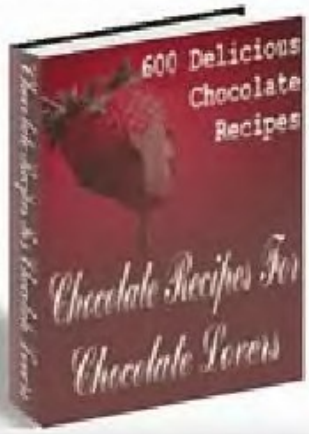

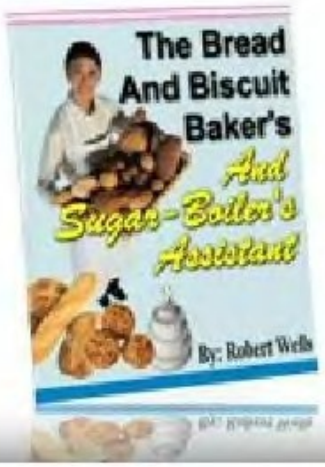

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